THE BOYS OF SCROOBY

RUTH HALL

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Ruth Hall

THE PINE GROVE HOUSE.

A DOWNRENTER'S SON.

THE GOLDEN ARROW. With a frontispiece.

THE BLACK GOWN.

THE BOYS OF SCROOBY. With a frontispiece

IN THE BRAVE DAYS OF OLD. A Story of Adventure in the Time of King James the First With a frontispiece.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
BOSTON AND NEW YORK

"A man in gayer dress than Hugh was used to" (*Page 3*)

THE

BOYS OF SCROOBY

BY

RUTH HALL

AUTHOR OF "IN THE BRAVE DAYS OF OLD"

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TO

HERBERT SEARLE

IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF JUNE, 1897

THIS BOOK IS

DEDICATED

PREFACE

Pursuing the purpose of a former book, I have sought, in the following pages, not so much to write a romantic story as to bind together a few of the memorable scenes of a certain time into that sheaf which we call History.

The narrative of our own country is dear to us all, and in this I wished to interest and instruct young Americans, by showing them what related to its beginnings in the Old World no less than in the New. To give those facts in the form of fiction, probabilities must sometimes be sacrificed, but I have never knowingly trifled with the truth. The recorded statements of the times are always adhered to, except, of course, as my three heroes are introduced. The sole exceptions to this rule lie in the disposition of John Billington's sons and of Elsje van Houwening (I can find no trace of her future beyond her

marriage to Grotius' servant), in the part Natauquaus is made to play in the Jamestown massacre, and the friendship implied between Grotius and John Robinson; also in the sinking of the canoe in chapter twenty-one. The Indian chieftain suffered for the murder of his master, but a little before this period, while the bare relation of the incident is woven into a purely fanciful account.

Beyond these details, everything relating to any historic personage or place is in accordance with my information. The theory advanced on page 296, as to the origin of Yankee Doodle, was that of M. Thierry as quoted in the Ticknor Letters and Journal.

To the boys who received "In the Brave Days of Old" most kindly, and to its many older and no less courteous critics, I offer another tale of the earliest happenings in these now United States.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	An Old Manor-House	1
II.	Overtaken	13
III.	The Wreck of the Sea-Venture	24
IV.	A Kettle for a Princess	35
V.	To El Dorado	47
VI.	"Sir Judas"	58
VII.	Jack gives his Word	68
VIII.	Called to be King	80
IX.	The Bridge of Moldau	89
X.	The Snow King melts	99
XI.	In a Box	109
XII.	A Game of Pall Mall	118
XIII.	Down the Ladder	129
XIV.	For Old Acquaintance	140
XV.	The Pilgrims' Progress	152
XVI.	The Voyage of the Mayflower	163
XVII.	The First Encounter	173
XVIII.	"Welcome, Englishmen"	184
XIX.	The Lost Boy	195
XX.	The Rattlesnake's Message	206
XXI.	Orson's Revenge	217
XXII.	Hugh makes a Purchase	227
XXIII.	Jack o' the Feather's Friends	237
XXIV.	For Pocahontas' Sake	247
XXV.	The Boy by the Wayside	258

XXVI. Weston's Men 268
XXVII. "Captain Shrimp" 278
XXVIII. Twenty to One" 287
XXIX. The Canoes meet 297
XXX. "Who art Thou?" 307

THE BOYS OF SCROOBY

CHAPTER I

AN OLD MANOR-HOUSE

"MOTHER," whispered Hugh Chisholm, stealing across the room, "there is a spy at the paddock gate. He is looking towards the house."

Mistress Chisholm turned to the young man who sat in the duskiest corner, a young man with a sweet, kind face, in the black dress of a clergyman.

"Hark you, Master Robinson," she said. "The constable is set a watch for my husband. Oh, sir, what shall we do?"

John Robinson's voice was very soothing. "There is nothing to fear. The Lord hath once delivered Brother Thomas out of the hands of the law. All things are possible to Him."

"But it often seems that His promise is to keep the soul, not the body from harm. I do

fear for my goodman. I fear for these my lads."

She cast an apprehensive glance upon Hugh and after little John, peering from the doorway. This child now raised his hand to attract attention: the very babies had learned caution.

"There hath another fellow joined the first," he said. "They lean upon the paddock gate and turn not away their eyes from the house."

The minister saw it was time to act. He motioned Hugh to come to him, when, bending his head, he murmured: "Steal away by yonder door, my son, and take the path towards Austerfield. Meet thy father and say what awaits him. Be swift, Hugh, and begone."

The lad nodded intelligently. With a deep bow, first to the man and then to his mother, he glided noiselessly from the cottage by the exit which Master Robinson had pointed out, and which was unseen from the southward pasture. He ran down to the hedge and entered the rough path that led through meadows once productive, before the landowners had taken to sheep-raising, in the recent demand from Holland for wool. The resources of

peasants and small farmers were crippled when their landlords turned grain-fields into sheep-walks, and added greatly to the distress that promoted thoughts of emigration.

Hugh reached Bawtrey, about a mile from his home, in so short a time that, eying the sun, he knew some moments must still pass before his father would leave Austerfield. Thomas Chisholm went abroad of late only by stealth, in the dawn or the evening dusk. His son, therefore, seated himself upon the stile beyond the tiny hamlet to wait for him.

Presently a soft step crossed the turf. The boy started and looked up. There stood beside him a man in gayer dress than Hugh was used to, with ribbons at his knee and his wrist and a plume in his drooping hat. Hugh sprang to his feet, making a polite salute. The stranger smiled broadly.

"Well done, my little man; thine are gentle manners. It is plain to see that thou art the son of a well-born house and hast nothing in common with the Brownist rabble of these parts."

His keen eyes were fixed upon Hugh. The boy suspected a trap: that the speaker wished to surprise him into some incautious expression. He was prepared for that sort of treat-

ment after years of persecution in which he, young as he was, had shared. His cheeks burned with anger, but he answered evasively:

"I thank you, sir, since you praise my parents. If it please you, I will be seated again."

"So well it pleases me," was the reply, "that I shall sit me down beside thee and rest, for a time, this evening hour."

He took his place by the boy.

Hugh's heart sank. What should he do if his father were to appear, and who could say that this was not another spy besides those watchers whom he had left at the home-field? His pulses beat fast, although he assumed a calm demeanor, trusting that the newcomer would grow tired, before long, of his society and of the questions which he feared he was about to endure. And almost immediately that inquisition began: —

"Hast acquaintance in the county?" his companion first essayed.

"My home is not far hence," Hugh answered briefly.

"At Bawtrey?"

"Nay, not at Bawtrey."

"At Austerfield?"

Hugh jumped from the step where he had

been perched: "Sir, I am but a boy, and you are a gentleman. Surely you would not that I set you a pattern of behavior?"

"What means the little rogue?" cried the man.

Hugh's pulse beat fast. "I mean that I asked not whence you came, nor whither you might go. I crave the like secrecy for myself."

The other saw that he could not frighten nor force the boy. He must try some cunninger means. "Sit thee down," he said gently. "I meant no harm. At the least," as Hugh reluctantly resumed his seat, "thou canst tell me if one William Brewster dwells hereabouts. There is nothing wrong in that question, to be sure."

"Nay," Hugh replied. "Yet it is strange how any could come within a mile of Scrooby and fail to learn that William Brewster was its master of the post until a twelvemonth since."

"He is a great man in the county?"

"In that county," Hugh corrected, laughing. "Scrooby is in Nottingham, Bawtrey is in York. Master Brewster is agent to Sir Samuel Sandys, the archbishop's son, and hath his home in the nobleman's great manor-house."

"I have seen him once," observed the stranger, "years since, in the Netherlands."

William Brewster was Hugh's hero. His eyes kindled: "Say you so?" he exclaimed. "And can you tell me of his deeds? He hath led a brave life, hath he not, good sir?"

The man inclined his head, well pleased. "I will soon have this canny little fellow too eager to think what he is saying." So he reflected, and began glibly: "In truth, William Brewster saw much service there. He was attendant to the secretary of state in Holland, while Davison acted as a special agent of the Crown."

"Moreover, it is said," Hugh broke in, "that, when the Netherlands surrendered their cautionary towns to Queen Elizabeth, the keys were given over to Master Brewster. Was not that an honor?"

"A rare honor. So when the secretary was thrown into the Tower, he took the golden chain from his own neck, and flung it over Brewster's shoulders. That, too, were something of which to boast. And men think," he added, regarding the boy closely, "that the queen served Davison a mean trick, and Brewster no less, since he fell with his master. She signed the death warrant of Mary Stuart,

bidding her secretary to carry it out betimes. Afterwards she disgraced him that she might shift the blame to him. Hast thou hearkened to such tales as these?"

"That is all past and gone," was Hugh's evasive rejoinder. "Her Majesty, God save her, is dead. Master Brewster, I know, is a loyal subject of King James."

"And yet," observed the man, with the same sidelong regard, "he favors this sect of Brownists."

"What *is* this sect of Brownists?"

"Independents, Separatists. They scorn the name of their founder, Robert Brown. He was a turncoat, whose memory shames them — traitors and plotters that they are!"

"Why traitors?" Hugh broke out fiercely. "Because they think not, with the Churchmen and the Puritans, that the State should rule a man's religion? Because" —

"For so young a disputant," said the stranger, bowing in mockery, "thou hast somewhat close knowledge of the schisms that would rend our faith asunder. How camest thou by this wisdom beyond thy years?"

Hugh's color rose in a rage at himself for the betrayal of his sympathies: "One must

hearken to the talk," he remarked, "since it is all about one. One must know" —

His voice died away. The man felt his involuntary start. He followed the direction of Hugh's eyes and saw two wayfarers approaching them in the twilight. He looked sharply at the men for a moment, which gave Hugh opportunity to recover himself. The boy leaned back upon his seat, whistling softly and beating time with one hand against the stile. That hand was stretched behind the shoulders of his companion and, while the others kept the tune, the index finger pointed in the direction, not of Scrooby village, but of its manor-house. The travelers came nearer. One was a mere lad, one was older, graver, and worn with care. Hugh's heart ached while he noted afresh how sad his father had grown. His own expression gave no sign of recognition to William Bradford or Thomas Chisholm. He saw them glance in his direction. Would they heed the pointing finger? For now he must rise, and let them pass, all with the same indifferent manner on his part and on theirs.

These three were used to subterfuge, and the men understood the situation. Hugh had come to warn them of something amiss;

he had been accosted and prevented from delivering his full message. They walked on towards Scrooby. Would his father go straight to those men at the home gate? Or had he read the gesture which told him to fly to Sir Samuel's house?

He saw that they conferred, hesitating where the roads forked. Finally they chose their path: the one that led towards the shelter William Brewster was ever glad to give. Hugh breathed a sigh of relief.

"Shall we walk on together?" said the man, rising. "The wind blows sharp after sunsetting. Art thou far from home?"

Hugh's answer was to turn towards Austerfield. His companion, confident the boy belonged at Scrooby, admired the calmness with which he strove to throw him off the track, as they set out to the northward, and every step so much the farther out of Hugh's way. Before the poor village inn they parted. The deepening shadows hid the little fellow, when he immediately dropped his easy, lounging manner. Down the street he fled, out into the fields once more, and homewards.

The two miles or so were soon covered, since he scarcely paused for breath. It was not long before his father's cottage came in

sight. He saw that it lay dark and desolate.

"They are at the manor," he said to himself.

The Separatists were accustomed to meet in a secret spot for a Sunday (or Sabbath, as they had begun to call it), which lasted from five o'clock in the morning until dark. Occasionally those fleeing from persecution sought the refuge over night. So Hugh turned at once to the agent's home, sure that he should find all his family there.

He made his way in the dim light through the forsaken garden, past the mulberry-tree said to have been planted by Cardinal Wolsey, across the drawbridge over the moat, and mounted the stone steps to the house. He gave a peculiar rap upon the entrance door. It was instantly and softly opened. He was admitted.

The great tapestried room was filled with stern-faced men and trembling women; there were other children, too, besides himself. The grim old portraits lining the wall looked down in disapproval upon the young minister, in his gown and bands, who stood before the smouldering fire, and upon the rows of his congregation filing along each side of the

apartment. Hugh stole to a place nearest the door, where he bowed his head to listen to the prayer.

He never forgot those words. They were interrupted by sobs and interjections, murmurs of "Amen," and "So be it," as John Robinson pleaded for grace that they might not, for fear of what man could do, fall away from the truth as it had been given to them.

There was more than one reason why Hugh should remember this prayer. It was the last he was ever to hear from his pastor's lips. It was the last time he was to stand, his hand reached out to clasp his mother's, while he echoed the common voice and said Amen.

His parents had told him nothing of their plans, thinking it wise to keep the secret even from their sons; so that he was astonished, when the meeting broke up into little talkative groups, to overhear the arrangements for their immediate departure to Holland. Of course he recalled the attempted flight of the Separatists six months before, the distress when they were surprised, and his father, with several others, was thrown into jail. He knew they were to try again, but not that it was to be at once.

"Is that, think you, why the spies were

out?" he asked of William Bradford. "Can they have learned of this plot also?"

Bradford shook his head. "It may be. I know not, though I fear the worst. Ha! What is that?"

A loud knock sounded at the entrance door.

CHAPTER II

OVERTAKEN

THE knocking continued.

This was not the first time the Scrooby congregation had been interrupted. Every one, down to little John Chisholm, knew what to do. Master Brewster's servants separated themselves from the others. His housekeeper, her husband and children moved noiselessly hither and thither, pushing the furniture into place, and giving the room its wonted appearance. The agent, meanwhile, stole to the hallway, casting a last look behind him as he went to see if all was prepared for the intruders.

His guests were disappearing through a door where a panel had slid back. John Robinson held aside a lifted strip of tapestry while the long procession filed through the narrow space.

"Hugh," whispered Master Brewster, "thou art to stay with me."

The boy nodded and seated himself at the oaken table in the middle of the room. He

took Anne Carter up on his knee while the child's parents hushed the others in their excited murmurs, and listened to the parley in the passage. Presently Master Brewster returned, followed by three men. Hugh recognized them as the spies before his father's house and his companion at the Bawtrey stile.

The man knew him, too, in one sharp, amused look, although he addressed himself to his reluctant host.

"I tell you," he said angrily, "it is no secret that this fellow Robinson hath entered here."

"Well said," was the calm rejoinder. "Do you see him?"

The agent waved his hand to indicate the occupants of the room.

"There are no lack of nooks and crannies to hide the rogue in the archbishop's house. And greatly it must please my lord that his servant should so use his roof in sheltering traitors to the Church and to the king."

William Brewster's lip curled contemptuously: "You have done well," he observed, "in so small a space of talk to speak so many falsehoods. This house is not the archbishop's, who hath given it to his son. I am the

son's agent, and none of my lord's. You have not beheld one traitor beneath its roof. Nor can you, nor any other man, prove that the good Master Robinson doth ill to His Majesty."

"You waste time and words," quoth one of the three who had not spoken before. "The house must be searched."

He produced his warrant.

Master Brewster seated himself beside his shepherd. "Hasten, if you will be so good," he said. "These little ones should go to bed and to sleep."

The men left the room, whence they proceeded up and down the stairs. They could be heard, on the floor above, stumbling about by the dim light of the lantern they carried, moving chests and wardrobes, tossing obstacles aside. After a long interval they returned.

"Are you satisfied?" asked William Brewster.

Hugh's former companion glared in a fury about him. He crossed over to the boy, and drawing his sword, he pricked him lightly on the throat.

"Doth its touch please thee?" he inquired, with a malignant smile.

Hugh, at that moment, was paying more

heed to the pressure of Master Brewster's hand, as the agent leaned across and took frightened little Anne from his knee. It was a signal long ago agreed upon. Hugh understood how he was to act.

"Oh, sir," he cried, in apparent alarm. "I pray you, harm me not. I will guide you — I will show you. Right well I know the way he went."

In his eagerness he somewhat overdid the part. His persecutor was surprised at his cowardice, after the resolution shown a few hours earlier. William Brewster and Carter held their breath.

"The little craven!" muttered the constable. "Well, well," he broke in on the boy's exclamations, "show us, then, and be done with the matter."

Hugh ran across the room and raised the piece of tapestry. "Here is the door," he said.

"Shame on thee!" called Anne.

The men looked as if they would echo the indignation of the child, which, however, served to bolster up their leader's belief in Hugh's sincerity. They darted to the opening, examined it, and saw a narrow flight of stairs leading to the cellars.

"Light the lanthorn again," gruffly commanded the chief speaker.

He was utterly unscrupulous, yet he was in some way disappointed that he had found a lad who, in serving him, should prove no better than himself. Hugh read his contemptuous look, and his cheeks burned. He loathed the rôle he must play, while he played it well.

"The stairway leads to the vaults," he went on quickly. "He — but, oh, sir, there is a door to the outer air, and a passage to yonder moat border. It may be Master Robinson hath escaped thence."

"Thou chattering fool!" broke out the man, discomfited. "Thou knowest he is gone."

He supposed this to be the reason of Hugh's officiousness: the boy was assured that, after all, his good pastor had safely fled. Nevertheless, they made an excursion to the cellars, only to find the outer door ajar, and no trace of the fugitive. After this disappointment they did not go back to the waiting group above stairs, but took their reluctant course homeward.

The instant they were sure of the departure Master Brewster hastened to the secret staircase, followed by the others. They pushed

aside an inner panel and a ladder was disclosed. Up this they mounted to a narrow closet, hidden away under the eaves.

Here they found the Separatists crowded together, anxiously awaiting them. Here, too, were bundles and boxes, such signs of their approaching departure as they had not dared to leave in the more public rooms below.

Their last preparations were made in furtive whispers. They were to fly at once to Amsterdam, which was at that time regarded as the haven of religious liberty.

It was a strange night journey. Across the country stole the little band to the place on the river Humber where they were to meet a skipper from Zealand. At the spot agreed upon, not far from Hull, the women and children were to be sent on in a boat, while the men made the rest of the expedition also by land.

"I shall keep Hugh with me," announced Thomas Chisholm.

The boy cried out in pleased surprise. His father smiled down at him in the darkness. They were nearing the lonely shore where their numbers were to separate.

"Thou wouldst not be protected with the women and children?" he asked.

"'T were base to be pushed off from land out of fear of pursuit. Mother and our Jack must suffer it, but I am strong to fight if they follow us. I thank you, father, that you will not send me hence."

"Nay, nay," said Master Chisholm. "It is best that thou abide on land."

His wife murmured her disapproval. He soothed and silenced her.

"We may need every strong arm that can smite the enemy," he argued, with an uneasy glance into the darkness. "The visit to the manor weighs upon me, and the spies set round about. Some word of our intent hath come to the ears of those in authority. Should we be set upon as we were in our former flight" —

Mistress Chisholm clung to his arm in speechless weeping. She knew too well what must happen then. And yet her husband thought it wise to hold back Hugh, instead of sending him away in the boat with her!

They had now reached the river and encountered a raging wind, with the little craft tossing upon the waves. After farewells, for a few hours only, as they hoped, the sailing party embarked. Hugh bore with him gratefully, to the end of his life, the remembrance

that his mother kissed him again and again, finding time, in that moment of parting, to say: —

"Have a care of my boy, Thomas. Have a care of him."

While his father answered: "Fret not thyself. He is no less dear to me."

Those were the last words he was ever to hear her speak.

The boatload were all sickened by the rocking of the waves. Having reached the rendezvous before the ship's arrival, the oarsmen proposed that they should row into a little creek to find still water. Here they were stranded by the receding tide, while they sat quietly, watching the day break, and the vessel which was to carry them away sail in from sea. Presently they spied the party of men coming down to the beach.

"There is a boat putting in from the ship," called Jack.

"It is for us," Anne Carter added.

But they were mistaken. The captain considered it expedient to take the men on board, and wait for the tide to float off the bark.

"Go thou, Hugh," said the agent.

"Nay," William Bradford objected. "Think

you not that Master Robinson and Brother Brewster should be the first sent out of peril?"

All agreed to this, except the two most interested. John Robinson looked across at the agent: "I shall see the last weak little child in the ship," said he, "before I go."

William Brewster inclined his head. "And I."

There was nothing more to urge. Meanwhile the impatient seamen were crowding a number of men, Thomas Chisholm among them, into their boat. It set off, weighted to the water's edge; the others stood upon the shingle watching its passage.

"And Hugh went not?" asked William Brewster, looking about and spying the boy.

He shook his head: "There was no room for me. Why should I hasten?"

"Because," with a heartsick groan, "it was then or never. Hark! O Bradford, what we feared hath come to pass!"

He spoke to the young man next him, but they all looked up, crying out as with one voice. Away to the west rose a cloud of dust and the trample of horses' feet. Against the red sky of the morning they could now see the pursuit: a troop of soldiers was coming down upon them. Nor was this the worst.

The ship's captain, too, witnessed the approach. If he lingered, he had fines and imprisonment to fear; despite the agonized entreaties of those who had reached the vessel, he spread all sail and flew away.

It proved a fearful voyage. A gale rose that lasted through seven days and nights. The ship drifted close to the Norwegian coast, where the crew gave themselves up for lost. At length the wind died down. On the fourteenth day they arrived at Amsterdam.

Matters had gone no better with those they had left behind. The men on the beach, the women in the boat, alike were surrounded and captured. Hugh's mother could not get sight of him as, Jack pulling distractedly at her gown, she was roughly ordered by the constable to follow him to the fate, he said, she deserved.

No one knew what that fate was to be, not even the justices before whom they were taken. It was not a crime for mothers and children to accompany their husbands and fathers wheresoever they chose to go. They were penniless, so that they could not be fined. Mistress Chisholm left the presence of the magistrate in company with the agent's housekeeper, who motioned her aside for a conference.

"Master Brewster sent me this," said Mistress Carter, displaying a slip of paper. "It provides for so many as we may gather together before nightfall. Yet we must hasten."

Indeed, a meeting-place was appointed, and they were told of a vessel which, if they could contrive to get to it, would follow the ship that had sailed that morning. The two women, with some score of others from Scrooby, reached the pier and were taken on board without further accident. Sandys's agent and Master Robinson, although not with them, speedily found means of escape. The greater part of the fugitives in such ways as these took passage for the Netherlands and, before the summer had set in, met again in Amsterdam.

When, after that disastrous voyage, Thomas Chisholm arrived in port, he was awaited by his wife, who stood on the wharf to welcome him, their youngest boy by her side. Her wide, horrified eyes searched the company filing across the gangplank. The man's face grew white as he saw but one child with her.

"Hugh is not here?" he gasped.

Mistress Chisholm threw up her arms. "I thought him safe with thee. And was he left in England, then? Oh, master, we have lost our son forever!"

CHAPTER III

THE WRECK OF THE SEA-VENTURE

When the attack upon the beach began, Hugh's first impulse had been to hasten to the boat in the creek, and defend his mother. He flew across the strand, looking back eagerly as he ran. The picture he saw was stamped ineffaceably upon his mind: the horses plunging in the tumbling waves that broke upon the shore, the jeering, threatening men who closed in about the little band of fugitives, all seen against the gorgeous light of the sunrise. He even marked how William Brewster's long cloak floated out on the high wind, and how serene was John Robinson's face surrounded by noisy foes.

The rasping click of horses' hoofs fell upon the pebbles. There followed a swooping sound; something darkened the sunshine and fell like a monstrous bat enveloping him from head to foot. He was caught as if in a web. He heard a chuckle of satisfaction. His assailant leaped to the ground. Men ran

up, and then the riding-cloak that had been tossed over his head was pulled away. Five strong fellows pounced upon him at once and secured his hands and feet with thongs, after which a bandage was tied across his mouth. One stood by, directing them. It was the man who had questioned him at the Bawtrey stile, who had invaded the manor-house at Scrooby.

Even had Hugh not been silenced, he understood how futile would have been reproach or entreaty. In a profound despair, he suffered them to lift him to a sort of litter which was in waiting, and which he found had other occupants. A boy and a girl lay there gagged and bound. He recognized them as Mary Taylor and her cousin, Richard Ford, from Austerfield. Tears rolled down the girl's cheeks, and the boy's face was set in horror.

The litter was lifted up to the men's shoulders. They were carried away along a high-road, on mile after mile. The leader rode, the carriers stumbling as best they might behind him. When some hours had passed a halt was made. The men rested while the prisoners were given food and drink, although there was no opportunity for a word

between them. By and by the march was resumed. At nightfall they encamped in a wood not far from some town, for they knew that two of their captors visited the place for provisions.

They brought back news as well. Hugh strained his ears to catch what they were saying to him whom they called Master Ratcliffe.

"Deposed?" he heard this man cry out. "What mean you, varlets? My brother, the captain, deposed?"

"Even so," said one in malicious amusement. "It is whispered, too, that Smith, in his 'Rude Answer,' called Ratcliffe a poor, counterfeit impostor; saying that he had been sent home lest the country should cut his throat."

"Cut my brother's throat?" repeated the other. "And he 'a poor, counterfeit impostor'? Would that I had John Smith's own precious throat here between these two good hands of mine!"

"All that is nothing, Master Ratcliffe," interrupted another man impatiently. "The matter stands thus: is the kidnaping worth its dangers? May not the plantation itself be forsaken? Gosnold is dead, Martin gone, and Wingfield, and your brother. Kendall is shot" —

"But Smith remains," said Ratcliffe vehemently. "While John Smith is king of South Virginia, there will be plantations — and a market for these children!"

Hugh looked across the litter towards his companions, to see if they understood what was the purpose of their capture. Mary gave him a glance of intelligence. Richard was asleep.

They had fallen into the hands of those infamous speculators who plied the trade in human beings which went part way to supply the Virginia settlements with service. They were to be shipped, then, across seas.

Thus journeying along byways, avoiding the villages, and only pausing when fatigue was inexorable, Ratcliffe's home was reached at last. Hugh had begun to feel distressed for the strain upon the girl, brave as her behavior had been during their forced march. He was relieved to find that Mistress Ratcliffe proved not unkindly, and seemed to take something of a fancy to her charge. Richard was dispatched straightway to Virginia, while his cousin was employed in the domestic affairs of the London house. In the greater freedom which their master was now obliged to give them, Hugh discovered

that there was reluctance to send out more than one of the captives at a time. He was to await another shipment.

Mary and he conferred together, when they found opportunity, and exchanged whatever intelligence they gathered. She was an orphan, and by no means miserable in her new situation.

"I have not such blows and hard words to bear," said she one day, "as in the home of my uncle Ford. But, for thy friends, Hugh, if thou art sent away and I tarry behind, mark thee, I will get word to thy mother in the Netherlands of what happened to thee."

Hugh thanked her, adding: "I think that time is at hand. From my bedcloset at night I hear Ratcliffe plot to get me place in this great fleet that shall bear the governor and captain-general."

"Is John Smith then deposed?" asked Mary curiously. The children had acquired considerable information concerning Virginian affairs.

"Returned home wounded," Hugh replied. "Nine vessels are to strengthen the colony. And it may be, I go with them."

The next morning he found a moment to

bid Mary good-by. He was to sail that very day. The girl was cheerful and composed: —

"When I come," she said, "I shall have two friends to greet me there."

Hugh, also, bade farewell with a light heart. Captivity had been grievous, and the prospect of adventure was no less delightful.

The reinforcements left England in the latter part of May. Hugh was on board the Sea-Venture, which held one hundred and fifty emigrants, besides Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Somers, the admiral. All went well until it was reckoned that Virginia was but a week away. Now a hurricane fell on them, sweeping the fleet asunder, and the Sea-Venture was lost to sight. The others went on their way without her.

The doomed ship sprung a leak. Every man and boy was pressed into the service; they pumped night and day in vain.

"There is nothing more," said Sir Thomas, "save to throw ourselves into the sea."

At the moment the lieutenant-governor uttered this exclamation, it was followed by another from the admiral: —

"Land!" he cried. "Land!"

All could see it now, for they were fast ap-

proaching. The question was whether the yawning seams of the poor old Sea-Venture would permit her to touch the shore. They waited in dogged endurance for what should come. She neared and neared, the men at the pumps working ceaselessly. At last she rose upon the crest of a wave, and was carried in. Between two outlying rocks the ship was firmly fixed.

The admiral knew at once where they were. A wreck had occurred in these parts before, and buccaneers sometimes landed here. It was an uncanny spot; the Isles of Devils was the expressive name given to what is familiar to us as Bermuda.

Hugh did not regard this shipwreck as so dreadful a fate. Never was there a boy who has not longed to be cast away upon a fertile island; and when the wind and rain died down, the sun shone on the luxuriant vegetation and charming prospects of their harbor. There were fish to be caught, and fowl of various kinds, with swine, brought there by pirates, running in the woods. The sailors began, without delay, to build huts and cover them with a thatch of palm leaves. The ship was rifled of everything of value, which was stored out of reach of the waves.

So some time went by pleasantly enough, until one day Hugh approached the admiral, cap in hand: —

"Sir," he began, "I would ask a favor at your hands. If it be true what the men say, that the longboat is to set sail for South Virginia, may I have a place therein?"

Sir George looked pleased and touched: "Nay, nay, my lad," he exclaimed. "It is not for children, such work as this. Those who go are seamen bred to hardship and endurance. Thou must be content to remain in safety here with me."

The boy's face fell. "Hark you," the admiral went on good-naturedly, "ere long there may be boat building, and boat sailing, too, Hugh Chisholm. And then shall we all be free."

Hugh did not understand this hint, and Sir George made no further explanation. The longboat was soon after manned by nine volunteers, stored, and pushed into the water. The others bade its occupants Godspeed, watching till it disappeared upon the waste of waters. Nothing ever was seen nor heard of it again.

Days and weeks passed. During their stay here a marriage was performed, the admiral's wife died, and two children were born, a boy

and a girl. The former was called Bermudas, the latter was Bermuda Rolfe. Most of the party were growing into an absolute content with the easy life. Sir George, however, never ceased to advocate, at first privately, and at length in public, the attempt to construct vessels by which to be carried away. At first the lieutenant-governor bitterly opposed the plan. By degrees he came to see that it might be feasible, and the men were set to work. Timbers and bolts were taken from the old ship, cedars hewn and sawed into planks. Two small barks were thus constructed. A farewell service of the Holy Communion was celebrated, and the emigrants put out to sea.

In a fortnight's time they passed the mouth of the river and went on up stream to the settlement of Jamestown. As the white sails came into view from the island a shrill cry was wafted to their ears. Truly it was a strange welcome. They saw the palisade half ruined; then that against it was huddled a group of skeleton figures. These fell upon their knees and stretched out their wasted hands to the boats.

A profound silence fell while the little company landed. One white-faced, emaciated lad

tottered towards Hugh and sank weakly into his arms. It was Richard Ford.

"Bread," he mumbled, "give me bread to eat! I have fed — Hugh, I have fed upon skins, and upon grass. Oh, Hugh, I have tasted the flesh of a corpse!"

It was the awful truth. Never was direr famine known than that which had been endured by the Jamestown colony. It was too late to save the lives of some of the sufferers. Hugh waited upon and tended Mary's cousin, but the unfortunate creature was dying. By nightfall he was dead.

The lieutenant-governor did not know how to act, since his own stores would not tide over this terrible time. He concluded that there was nothing for it but to forsake the place thus hardly reached, to struggle on so far as the fishing-stations to the Northwest — Newfoundland — whence they could be taken home. Assuredly it was not prudent to linger here. With reluctance the desolate town was dismantled. Sir Thomas Gates stood on the shore, watching the embarkation to the summons of the rolling drum. Guns were fired, and they sailed away down the river.

Early the next morning there was a buzz of excitement in the company. Glad tidings

were repeated from man to man. A rowboat had been seen approaching them. The admiral hailed it, and there was a mighty shout of joy at the reply.

Lord Delaware was come from England, bringing men and food, and all things necessary. They were saved.

On that June Sunday Delaware landed before the stockade of James City. He fell upon his knees and bowed his head while he thanked God that he had arrived in time to save Virginia. Then he rose, and as he passed the gate the color-bearer advanced and knelt at his feet, so that the very flag of England made obeisance to him. Hence he was led to the church, a tiny log house which was gayly trimmed with flowers. Master Bucke preached a thanksgiving sermon, followed by an address from my lord to the settlers, full of encouragement and cheer.

Such was the beginning of Hugh's new life in the New World.

CHAPTER IV

A KETTLE FOR A PRINCESS

"A SLOOP is at anchor in the river, Master Rolfe," said Hugh, coming in at the door. "Is it your wish that I visit it?"

The young man looked up in no small annoyance. "Argall again," he muttered. "What can the rogue be after now? Go to him, Chisholm, and discover his purpose. Yet that were easier said than done; Argall is never one to tell his mind."

"It may be that he is on his way to the Potomac country," suggested Hugh. "Shall we seize the chance to buy corn, if he will take a partner?"

His master gave slow assent: "We must have the corn, and no other way opens. So thou shalt accompany him, if it be Argall and his face is turned into the land for supplies."

With this permission Hugh hurried down the grassy path to the water, his pulses beating high with anticipation of the journey.

The past two years had been most eventful.

Sir George Somers arranged for the boy's future, before he left the colony, by persuading the Rolfe family to take him as an indented servant. When the communistic plan was abolished (and it is not a little remarkable that, both here and at Plymouth later, it was tried and found wanting), Master Rolfe, now a widower, kept the lad as his own.

After a wise administration, Delaware was obliged, from ill health, to resign his office and return home, being succeeded by the soldier Dale. Sir Thomas rigidly enforced the rules of his predecessor by tyrannic barbarities. From six to ten each morning, and from two to four each afternoon, all must work. At ten and at four the bell rang and they attended church. Those who resisted this order of things were horribly punished; those who attempted flight were burned alive. There were in Hugh's mind to-day, as he ran down the sunny slope to the water, the penalties by which Dale put down a conspiracy to overthrow his government. The young fellow had been a witness to those tortures of betrayal and redress. They formed one reason why he looked forward to the voyage with Argall as escape and change from indescribable horrors.

He did not like this adventurer any better than did John Rolfe, yet he was glad to recognize Captain Samuel upon the deck of the vessel, and to receive his hearty greeting. He had guessed rightly: the sloop was to explore the Potomac on a search for corn. Argall was grateful for company, so that arrangements were soon made, and they sailed away, with the planter waving farewell to Hugh from the lawn in front of his tobacco-fields.

The skipper was always kind, in a gruff, sailor fashion; Hugh wondered secretly why he felt that instinctive distrust of the man. During this companionship of day after day he had seen nothing to warrant the feeling. But, in the course of time they reached their destination, let down the anchor, and Argall left the sloop. He was about to visit a neighboring chief named Japazaws.

It was growing dusk when Hugh, pacing the beach, his boat drawn up beside him, heard the sound of hastening steps. He looked back along the land. Down from the gloomy stretches of wood came the captain, accompanied by a score of Indians, hastening to the river bank, gazing behind them and to either side as if they expected pursuit. A young girl was dragged between two of the warriors.

Her hands were bound, her long black hair fell over her shoulders without concealing the tears upon her cheeks.

"She has been stolen!" thought the boy in a rage.

He strode towards the skipper. "What is this?" he demanded. "Have you kidnaped the girl?"

"Nay."

Hugh was taken aback by this cool reply. "You have not stolen her?" he persisted.

"Nay," answered Argall in the same impudent manner; "I have bought her."

"Bought her?"

"For a copper kettle."

He turned his back contemptuously on the questioner and placed the girl in the boat. Hugh sprang to her side and whispered some comforting, friendly speech. He had no idea who she was, but it was enough to know that here was a woman in evident distress. Argall saw his companion's expression and the grateful look cast on him.

"Hark you, Master Chisholm," he called; "I will hear no more of this matter. Mutiny is not a jest, nor could a dead friend do Pocahontas service."

Hugh did not heed this insinuation that his

life would be the forfeit to further interference. He was absorbed in surprise at the name used.

"Is she, in truth, Pocahontas?" he exclaimed.

"None other. She was visiting Japazaws. Her host hath traded the Nonparella of Virginia to me for a copper kettle."

He roared with laughter at the joke of the whole affair. Hugh did not share in his merriment, although he had the sense to be silent.

As they made haste to James City with their prize, the boy took every opportunity to wait upon and talk with her. Besides his kindliness he was inquisitive concerning the maid who had saved the life of the Father of Virginia, and whose frequent visits to the settlement had suddenly ceased when John Smith returned to England. Thus it happened Hugh had never seen till now the heroine of many colonists' stories.

On their arrival she was given into the charge of the clergyman and his wife. When Powhatan learned of her abduction he demanded the instant surrender of his daughter, but Sir Thomas Dale concluded to utilize Argall's high-handed proceeding, and sent word that Pocahontas was held as hostage for the

return of men and arms carried off by the natives. The message was received in disdainful silence.

Hugh often went to see Pocahontas, until his chatter concerning the savage princess attracted Rolfe's attention, so that his master began to accompany him. Finally, to the boy's amusement, he saw that John's visits grew more and longer than his own. The high marshal, meanwhile, thought it time to employ the Indian as a means to secure their property.

He made up a party to accompany himself and Pocahontas on an excursion to her people. Hugh and Rolfe were of the number.

Threatening savages shot at them from hiding-places on the bank while they sailed down the James and into the York. At Machot John Rolfe and one other were sent into the forest, for an interview with the old chief, who refused to see them, or to make any save the vaguest promises. They returned discontentedly and emerged from the woods upon the shore.

The first thing they saw was Sir Thomas fairly capering with joy, embracing and showering affectionate phrases upon two Indians. When he spied the messengers, he ran towards them, holding out his hands: —

"You have declared the riddle," he cried. "Good Master Rolfe, our troubles with the savages are over and gone; and yours shall be the praise!"

Of course John Rolfe knew now what he meant. During his absence Pocahontas had been taken to land, and displayed to her assembled friends. Hugh, a spectator of the scene, thought, and the high marshal hoped, that there would be a pathetic reunion, leading to her ransom. They were surprised when the Nonparella said to her boy companion, in a cold voice, and loud enough to be overheard: —

"I wish to stay with you Englishmen. You love me, but my father prefers the old swords and axes he took from you. He will not exchange them for me."

Hugh questioned whether this offended pride would hold out when, a moment later, two warriors addressed the girl. One of them was Natauquaus, whom John Smith called the handsomest and bravest Indian he ever saw.

"My brothers!" she cried, in pleased surprise, and then she relapsed again into silence. On their part they showed considerable feeling, breaking through the usual savage stoicism.

Sir Thomas and his followers drew together

about the trio, beholding the proceedings in astonished interest. It was odd that the weeping, resisting captive, brought to them by Argall a year before, should betray so little affection for her kindred.

Presently she turned to Hugh. "Have you the letter?"

He stared at her. "Do you mean a letter from my master?"

"Yes."

"I have that with me. Sir," addressing the high marshal, "Master Rolfe commanded that I place this in your hands."

He drew the document — it was a very long one — from beneath his doublet. Pocahontas regarded him with a smile. She looked at her brothers proudly.

"I shall not return to you," said she. "Neither now nor ever. For I am to be the wife of Master Rolfe."

This happy ending, as they considered it, of the strife between natives and settlers met with general approval. Powhatan gladly gave his consent to the marriage, which took place in the Jamestown church immediately after the return of the expedition. Hugh acted as the groom's best man. When, smart in his new coat of "ffreshe fflaminge silke," he followed

Master Rolfe from the tiny vestry, he looked down upon a picture that stands alone in history.

The rude building, resting on pine columns, was the first permanent religious structure raised by the English in this country. There were wild flowers encircling the chancel. The bride, clad in the English dress, stood beside the hollowed tree trunk which served as font. Behind her showed the dark, keen countenance of her uncle Opachisco, who was to give her to John Rolfe. Her brothers were close at hand. The little room was filled, Indians in Indian garb jostling the white men's finery. The ceremony was conducted in English, Pocahontas forcing herself to repeat the unfamiliar sentences. It concluded, as all their services ended in those days, with, "Lord bless England, our sweet native country."

Hugh never heard the words without a homesick pang. During this time, whenever he found opportunity, he had sent missives in quest of his parents, but received no answer. It was his fixed purpose to some day go back to Europe and to them. This was not so readily done under the present government. The stern ruler sometimes repressed letters, and always discouraged emigration;

more than one king's pass was smuggled into the colony before Hugh obtained that brought to him by a good-natured fellow who hid it in his garter.

He was kept in hopes that his master might carry Pocahontas away to show the princess at the court of James; but that was to come later on. Now they made a happy home for themselves at James City, and afterwards another near the new town of Henricus, named for the Prince of Wales. Powhatan often sent gifts and messages to Mistress Rolfe, although he never visited her. It was said he shouted with glee when told she was so happy in her new life that she had no wish to return to him.

In the spring of 1616 Master Rolfe suddenly concluded to carry his family to England for a prolonged stay. Hugh, having served his time, was now free either to go with them, or to accept the offer of the London Company: fifty acres to each colonist who would clear and settle the tract, paying nominal rent to the crown. Sir Thomas's hard reign being at an end, he returned in the same ship with the Rolfes. Hugh felt that all things in Virginia promised better times, and gladly arranged to come back in due season. But, first, he de-

sired the journey, and ample chances to seek not only his parents but Mary Taylor, of whom he had lost every trace.

So they quitted the New World, to which John Rolfe and the boy had come together six years before. They were years wherein Hugh had changed from a child to a strong and hearty youth.

Mistress Rolfe was received at court as the daughter of a king. Hugh had just returned from one of several fruitless searches for Mary or the Ratcliffes, when, at a masque given by Queen Anne for the reigning favorite, he overheard a certain gentleman speak of his home in Amsterdam. He begged to be presented, and, going directly to the point, asked if Master Caryl could tell him of the Scrooby fugitives.

"You knew," said the Englishman, "that they removed to Leyden seven years since?"

"Nay," was the disconsolate reply, "I knew nothing concerning them."

"William Brewster, the good elder," went on Master Caryl, "is my familiar friend. I often resort to his printing-place, and there I meet with many Independents. Of what family seek you for news?"

"Of one Thomas Chisholm," answered

Hugh, "and his wife, and — and little Jack."

Master Caryl smiled, but sadly. "Little Jack is a fine grown lad at Heidelberg with the Palatine. There is a younger son — knew you not? — one Stephen, living in a Huguenot family in France."

"Have I another brother?" stammered Hugh, utterly bewildered. "How strange that I should hear it so! And why, pray you, sir, is neither one with his parents?"

"Because," Master Caryl sank his voice, taking the lad's hand pityingly in his, "my poor boy, it is a sad tale I must tell thee! Because they have lost both father and mother. God hath taken them."

CHAPTER V

TO EL DORADO

Hugh always looked back on his first visit to England as uniformly unfortunate. After the crushing news of his parents' death, and the repeated disappointments in his inquiries for Mary Taylor, he was in no mood to enjoy the gay career of Pocahontas's train, although he felt pride in the interest she excited. But her triumph was destined to be short. On his way to Holland Hugh accompanied the Rolfes to the ship by which they were to re-embark for Virginia, when the Indian girl was seized by sudden illness. She lived but a few days afterward.

Their plans were altogether disarranged by this blow. John Rolfe could neither pursue his voyage nor be left alone. It was only after some time had passed that the home-sick man turned his thoughts to his plantation. When Hugh could bring him to talk of his tobacco crops, — Rolfe was the first to try this plant's cultivation in Virginia, — he

felt he could lay out a course of procedure for himself once more. However, in the meantime another path had opened, so attractive that Hugh was tempted to again postpone his visit if he might enter upon it.

"What think you," he said, as they sat together, "of this Guiana scheme?"

Master Rolfe looked up languidly. "I have heard of no Guiana scheme. Tell me about it!"

"Sir Ralph Winwood hath persuaded his Majesty to send out men to El Dorado to seek for gold. Sir Walter can show where the mines are to be found. And he is to command the fleet."

For the first time Rolfe betrayed some faint interest. "What sayest thou? — Walter Raleigh pardoned to lead these men to Guiana?"

"Not pardoned, but released, since he is the one man who can guide the ships. It is understood that peace shall not be broken, nor a Spaniard harmed."

John Rolfe gazed into the youth's bright face. "And Hugh Chisholm would fain be of the party?"

"That would he."

"If that be true," observed Rolfe, "I will

bestir myself to bring it to pass. I owe you much, good Hugh. Here is opportunity for repayment."

He had no great difficulty in finding his former servant a place upon the Destiny. Hugh journeyed to Plymouth after leaving his kindly master, whom he readily promised that, after his work in the Old World was accomplished, they should meet again in Virginia.

He curiously regarded the arrival at Plymouth of Raleigh and his son. Young Raleigh was a fine looking man of twenty-four years. His father appeared older than his threescore adventurous seasons, not a few of them spent in captivity. His delicate features seemed worn and his figure betrayed the stooping shoulders and the lagging gait of the prisoner.

Rain was falling from sad-colored skies when they saw their last of England. Hugh kept his health, as they sped from north to south, and enjoyed the voyage. Many of the men, however, fell ill and Sir Walter was prostrated by a fever long before land was sighted. In a fierce gale two vessels became disabled, another was lost, and a fourth deserted.

"Nothing shall prosper with us," quoth old Allen. He was one of the sailors who had broken in the "green hand" and had been gruffly kind to Hugh since those first days. "Our leader is unlucky and we are under the ban with him."

They were leaning over the side of the Destiny, viewing the approach to the Cayana.

"You don't distrust our admiral?" Hugh questioned roughly.

"Verily I have faith in Sir Walter. Yet to take a condemned man out o' the Tower, and send him after treasure-trove — why, lad, 'tis against luck! 'T is tempting luck, no less."

Hugh smiled. He did not even trouble himself to reply, for at the moment he saw them conveying Raleigh above-deck, and ran forward to be of some assistance.

The sick man gazed gratefully upon sky and sea, his eyes kindling as they roved along the river banks, richly green and thronged with natives hurrying down to greet the newcomers. Among them was the admiral's old servant, Harry, who with the rest was full of tales of the Spaniards' barbarities.

"They capture our chiefs," he declared, "and baste their bodies with broiling bacon

over a roaring fire. Master, deliver us from their tyranny!"

This was so far from Raleigh's errand that he was constantly apprehensive of an encounter: —

"If I win the gold," he said to his son and his nephew, "whatsoever means I use will be forgiven. But, first of all, I must win."

In a few days Allen informed Hugh that an expedition was to be sent up the Orinoco in search of the mine. They both were drafted for it: —

"The admiral," he continued, "hath not strength for the journey."

"I would he were to command us," was Hugh's comment. "Master Kemyss is a good fellow, but no such leader as this mingle-mangle of men requires."

"I believe you," Allen answered, "and I fear these adventurers will work us mischief."

"Yet you go?"

"I go always," said Allen. "Never have I been left behind with the halt and him who was afraid."

They sailed, accordingly, up the river, through thickets of tropical foliage, while

all went well until they came in sight of a town.

"Are we to land?" Hugh inquired. "Why, surely those are no huts of savages! Allen, it is a Spanish settlement!"

"Spanish it is," was the sulky response. "And why our captain deems it wise to meddle with their concerns it becomes us not to question. Yet I do question!"

Right or wrong, Kemyss was busily disembarking all his forces at the little village. An Englishman from the first boat stepped on shore. He was instantly fired upon. Bullets rattled against the armor of the advancing men like hailstones. They fell back before the onslaught, and then they swept their weapons to their shoulders. Hugh looked appealingly at Allen; a man had fallen at his side; it might be his turn next.

"What shall we do?" he gasped. "Master Kemyss's last words, ere we left the ship, were that we should not fight the Spanish."

Allen took steady aim. "It was Kemyss brought us into this trap. He cannot look to us to be murdered and make no fight for it." So he fired.

While Hugh still hesitated he saw a Spaniard level his arquebuse at Walter Raleigh.

Instinctively he, too, cocked his gun, but too late to save young Raleigh. He pitched over upon his face and lay motionless. Hugh threw himself down beside him, raising the head of the dying man, and loosening his garments. When he looked up again the guns had ceased, the enemy were fled.

Hugh pushed past the others up to the captain. Bowing low, he pointed to the body of their admiral's son.

"Walter told me," began the youth, "when I stooped to care for him, 'Go on,' he said, 'May the Lord have mercy upon me, and prosper you in this enterprise!'"

Kemyss hung his head dolefully. "Poor Wat! Yet I doubt he is the most fortunate of us all."

They buried their dead in the Spanish church, and afterwards Captain Kemyss chose two boatloads to go on with him up the river looking for the mine. Allen was among the men who were taken on the expedition.

A few days later the waiting band saw from afar the approach of their party, in one boat now, that contained not more than half the company. It was easy to see that their journey had utterly failed in its purpose. Allen drew Hugh one side to give him much

the same details with which Kemyss was enlightening George Raleigh. The Spanish kept so unwearied a guard upon the river banks as to prevent any effort to land, and had killed nine of the Englishmen. Their captain finally gave up in despair what all his crew agreed was a hopeless task. George, however, was highly incensed at this conclusion.

"It must be done!" he cried vehemently. "We cannot return to my uncle with such report as this: his son's death, lack of gold, loss of men, and strife stirred up with the Spanish!"

Kemyss shrugged his shoulders. "If you crave a taste of papist bullets, take a boat to the southward. For my part I am come to think the gold of this El Dorado is fairy coin that will never line the pockets of Englishmen or Spanish."

Young Raleigh was not to be thus lightly diverted. He persisted in manning a boat, and this time Hugh was of the number. It did not require a day's voyage to convince them that it was impossible to reach the banks, constantly harassed as they were by an aggressive enemy. They returned, discouraged, to San Tomas and thence, having

abandoned every hope, sought Sir Walter on the Destiny.

They found, on reaching the ship, that Raleigh was still confined to his cabin. Kemyss felt no desire to face him, and so had written a long letter which he commissioned Hugh to deliver.

The youth was admitted into the presence of the sick man, who was lying upon his narrow couch and raised himself by one elbow to greet his messenger.

"Ha, Chisholm," he cried. "I heard of your return. Hath all gone well? And where is my son? Where is Walter?"

Hugh hesitated. "Master, your son left not San Tomas," he faltered.

"Why not?"

"Oh, sir, I pray you patience," —

Walter Raleigh sat bolt upright.

"He is not dead?"

"'T was painless; it was over in an instant. And he died with these words on his lips, 'May the Lord have mercy on my soul, and prosper your enterprise.'"

Sir Walter hid his eyes with his hand for a long silence. "How came it to pass?" he inquired at length.

"A Spanish bullet" —

"You have not met the Spanish?"

"They attacked us," the boy said stoutly. "We did but defend ourselves."

This reply was waived. "And the mine?"

Hugh shook his head despondently. "We found no mine. But Master Kemyss," he extended the letter, "hath sent you this to tell it all."

The maddened man thrust the paper back into his hands. "I care not to read," he exclaimed, "what can but say that I am undone. Nay, I will hear nothing! Mark thee, Chisholm, this is my deathblow. My head must answer for Kemyss's deed!"

Hugh regarded him pitifully, yet when he strove to speak —

"Leave me," said Sir Walter.

Kemyss was awaiting his messenger's return to the deck, and sprang to meet him.

"In what humor was he?"

"The worst," was the reluctant answer.

"He would not read the letter?"

"Not as yet. It may be that another time" —

"There is no other time," said Kemyss, and strode away to his cabin.

Immediately a pistol shot resounded throughout the ship. Hugh's heart stood

still. He guessed the worst, and bounded down the companionway.

There was the sight he dreaded. The captain lay, white and still, in his berth. The pistol had missed aim; then he had driven his long knife into his heart.

CHAPTER VI

"SIR JUDAS"

"SAID I not," observed Allen, "that the enterprise was banned?"

Knowing this was literally a matter of life and death, Sir Walter struggled to clutch at every fragment of hope. After Kemyss's suicide he summoned the officers of the fleet to his cabin and laid before them a wild plan, to himself explore the gold region. But the captains had listened to the horrors related by the natives concerning their cruel foe, until none of them dared face them. They absolutely refused to penetrate the treacherous, evil country.

The admiral next appealed to the crew of the Destiny. Hugh at once tendered his allegiance, as did Allen and twelve others. Raleigh gazed in weak despair at those who still hung back.

"What will you?" he asked: "that I lead against the Mexican plate fleet? Pardon is easy to win at home if we return with gold galore."

"We want no piracy," growled an old tar, "on top o' what hath been done already up the river."

Nothing could be effected with the mere dozen men who were loyal. Well knowing to what he returned, Sir Walter set sail for England. One by one, on that homeward voyage, his ships deserted him. In mid-June he reached Plymouth with the Destiny.

Here he was joined by his wife, who had only bad news to bring him. His old friend, Sir Ralph Winwood, was dead. The king was persistently urged by the Spanish ambassador to give up Raleigh's life for his violation of the pledge of peace.

As a pirate and as a traitor Sir Walter Raleigh was to be arraigned.

Allen had been so wrought upon by the young colonist's stories of Virginian life, that he was no sooner discharged than he took passage on an outward-bound vessel for Jamestown. Hugh agreed to join him there, and they planned their future home together; but first of all he must do what he could for this forlorn man, deserted to his enemies.

The little party set out with all speed for London. On the outskirts of Ashburton they encountered the vice-admiral of Devonshire,

Sir Lewis Stukely. He happened to be Raleigh's cousin.

"It is right pleasant," cried the old courtier, "to be among my kindred once again."

Stukely looked exquisitely uncomfortable at this greeting. He soon found occasion to beckon Hugh one side. "I might as well tell you," said he, "that I bear orders from his Majesty to arrest Sir Walter Raleigh. How shall I break these news to him?"

"It were passing strange to require such work of you," Hugh answered bitterly. "If it must be done, I know no course save to lay the worst, without delay, before my poor old master. His brave heart can bear whatever may befall him."

"And that need not be the worst." Stukely shot a cunning glance towards the youth.

"What say you?"

"It may be that we can get him away."

"How? Think you so?"

"There is a French vessel lying in the Plymouth harbor. Let us return thither, and some night, when mine eyes are closed, so that I tell no tales, you shall aid Sir Walter to fly to La Rochelle. Is that plan plain to you?"

"If he had gold in his purse," reflected Hugh, after a little thought, "it might serve at a pinch. But Sir Walter is penniless."

Stukely's manner changed immediately. "Penniless, quotha?" said he, raising his eyebrows in a sneer. "'T is not mine to supply the gold," and so he changed the subject.

Apparently with better success, he approached King, a captain of the ill-starred fleet, and one of the little company. The older man saw what was wanted; among Raleigh's old friends he secured the bribe which Sir Lewis demanded. He likewise found a vessel lying at Tilbury, and made arrangements for flight to France. The captain, who had been a sailor under King, could, he supposed, be relied upon: —

"As can Stukely, for this once," said the plotter. "He is false — false to his duty, and, doubtless, false in the end to our cause. Yet, for kinship's sake, and for the price we pay, he may serve us now."

Hugh looked incredulous. "I don't trust him even so far."

"We must trust him," King urged. "It is a last chance, and we cannot move without him. So on the morrow, at evening, we take to the sea once more. Pray for Godspeed, dear Chisholm."

On the night of the 9th of August two boats shot out from shore. Raleigh, wrapped

in his cloak, sat in the stern of one, side by side with his cousin and Captain Hart. In that which followed were King and Hugh Chisholm. The night was dark, being dimly lighted by twinkling lanterns from many barks at anchor. Suddenly Hugh touched King's hand.

"What is that large boat?" he whispered. "See!"

"I see. 'T is nothing. The river is full of boats."

"But not creeping along by stealth. What shall we do? Can we avoid it?"

"Be silent, Chisholm — that is the only thing."

"Nay — it is following us! Master, we are betrayed!"

At the same instant Raleigh spied the wherry stealing on in the shadow. He addressed Sir Lewis:

"Is that craft for us, good cousin?"

Stukely pulled a pair of handcuffs from beneath his doublet.

"It is for us," he said. "Walter Raleigh, I arrest you in the name of his Majesty King James."

Hugh half rose, as if to spring to Raleigh's rescue. King pulled him back.

"Row! Row like the wind," he hissed to those at the oar. "This purse for you if we reach the pier unharmed." Then he muttered in Hugh's ear: "The game is up, lad. Of what avail would it be for you and me to fling our lives away after that of the luckless admiral?"

Hugh gave a heartsick groan. "And what of us?" he asked. "Shall we part when we touch land?"

"'T were better so. Know you any safe hiding-place?"

"I know one sailors' house to which Allen often resorted. It is safe hidden from pursuit. And how will it fare with you?"

"I, too, have my refuge within reach," King answered as the boat grazed the wharf. "Now, out with you. Farewell, my lad!"

Hugh never saw him again. On the following day he heard of King's arrest, nor could he learn his fate. For himself, he was quite overlooked among more important men. Stukely, henceforth known only as "Sir Judas," died within the year a raving maniac, upon a lonely island where he had sought refuge from the shame and remorse that pursued him. From the Tower his cousin issued an appeal to king and queen. Anne of

Denmark would gladly have stood his friend, but she could do nothing save beg Buckingham's influence, and that was engaged on the side of Spain, because of the contemplated marriage between Charles, Prince of Wales, and the daughter of Philip III.

The king of Spain demanded either Raleigh's committal into his own hands in Madrid, or his instant execution in England. He faced three charges: the deception of his Majesty by an expedition for gold where there were no mines; a piratical attack upon a peaceful Spanish colony, and an attempt to capture the Mexican treasure fleet.

On October 28 the prisoner was wakened and carried out of the Tower, he well knew on what errand. His barber exclaimed that he had not yet curled his hair.

"Let them comb it who are to have it," was the light reply. "Dost thou know, Peter, any plaster that will set a man's head on again when it is taken off?"

His high spirits did not flag, even when he was brought before the chief justice, and told that he was to suffer, not for these late offenses, but under the old accusation of complicity in the Cobham plot of twelve years ago. He was conveyed to the Gate House, and on

the way, Hugh encountered his carriage. Raleigh smiled his relief that this true servant was not involved in his downfall.

"Well met!" he cried cheerfully from the window. "Thou must come betimes on the morrow, friend, and get thee a good place for the show."

Hugh understood too well what he meant. His eyes filled with tears. He strode close to the carriage side.

"Oh, my master," he pleaded, "if we must suffer it, jest not on that dire happening!"

"Tut, tut," said Raleigh, though his own face quivered. "This is my last mirth in the world. Do not grudge it to me."

The heavy vehicle rolled on, while he looked back over his shoulder to acknowledge mutely Hugh's leave-taking.

On the following day the youth was one of many thousands who surrounded the scaffold. Men about him were repeating the current rumors of how Raleigh passed his last night on earth. He had not slept, but wrote his protest against his execution; he saw his wife, and composed verses that are immortal.

After his breakfast and a smoke, he followed the sheriff out upon the scaffold. He was elegantly dressed, as usual, and bore him-

self serenely, smiling at sight of Hugh, and motioning to him and to others who stood at some distance.

"I pray you, come nearer," he called, "that you may hearken to my parting words."

Room was made for the group, who ascended the platform. Raleigh greeted each one by name, from the Earl of Arundel to his humble follower, Hugh Chisholm.

Now began a speech which lasted for a half hour, which roused the country, and whose fruits were made manifest in the day when James's son shared the fate of him who spoke. At last the sheriff ordered his friends to leave him. One after another departed reluctantly. When Hugh lingered, Raleigh said, smiling: "I have a long journey to go. Therefore I must take leave of you."

And so they all went away.

He gave the executioner the pardon that he craved, and, kneeling, prayed in silence, before stretching out his hands for a signal. Seeing that the headsman hesitated, he called twice:

"What dost thou fear? Strike, man, strike!"

His lips still moved, but it was in no speech to any upon this earth. While he was plead-

ing with his Lord in heaven, the axe fell, and he was summoned before that Higher Court.

A voice among the on-lookers cried, when the severed head was held up to their view: —

"We have no more like that to lose!"

So thought Hugh. This was the last of the Englishmen who made Elizabeth and her country illustrious forever.

"And now to Holland," he mused, making his way through the crowd. "There is nothing to keep me longer here. First, a sight of the Leyden folk, then of Stephen, and of Jack, if so it may be, and, after all, to Jamestown — the only home I know."

CHAPTER VII

JACK GIVES HIS WORD

In order to understand the character of Hugh's reception when he at length arrived where his family had so long preceded him, we must go back to the time of their flitting and narrate rapidly something of the changes which had since befallen that company.

For a year they tarried at Amsterdam, before taking up their permanent abode in Leyden, where William Brewster became a printer and William Bradford a silk dyer. Thomas Chisholm entered into partnership with his friend Brewster, although the close confinement and uncongenial labor told upon the older man accustomed to out of door pursuits. Moreover, neither he nor his wife ever recovered from the exposure of their terrible flight to Holland. Mary Taylor kept her promise and sent them word of Hugh's whereabouts. But before that message, or any letter from Virginia reached him, within a year of their arrival in Leyden, Master Chisholm succumbed to a prevailing fever.

Jack was a bright boy of eight, the baby Stephen was two years old, when their mother, too, fell ill. She was worn out by anxieties, over-work, and the shock of Hugh's disappearance, succeeded by her husband's death. Her sickness was long and tedious, but showed her that the children were not to be left alone. William Bradford, Master Brewster, and John Robinson were peculiarly interested in the boys, for whom they busied themselves at once, upon the death of Mistress Chisholm, in finding suitable guardians.

A friend of the pastor had fled to Switzerland in the time of Charles IX. and of Catherine de Medici. His son, born in Geneva, wandered in the course of time to Pisa, where he married. It was he who brought his pretty Italian wife one day to the Leyden parsonage. Mme. Benoît was grieving over the death of her only child, a boy of Stephen's age; she fancied a resemblance to her son, and the whim seized her to adopt the baby. It was all suddenly arranged. The Separatists remembered what the Benoîts had suffered, in time past, for their Huguenot faith, and were convinced that the child, should they surrender him, would be carefully trained.

So the matter was brought about, while

John, sorely bewildered by grief upon grief, was parted from his brother and sent to his own new home. This was to be with Master Whitecombe, a zealous Calvinist and member of the household of Juliana of Nassau, who agreed to train the lad in the position of page.

John's first duty promised to be most agreeable. He was appointed to go to England as part of the suite of Frederick, son to his mistress and aspirant to the hand of Elizabeth, daughter of James I.

"It is all very fine," said Master Whitecombe, in response to the boy's rapturous anticipation; "but a word of warning won't come amiss. You know that Britain is not over tender of you Separatists. Keep your religion in the background (I don't mean be ashamed of it), and — it is n't a bad thing, either, that you use French here habitually. You have become wonted to it, so that, if I were you, I should pose as a Frenchman at St. James's."

It was rather an absurd situation that Jack, still speaking French, should loudly expostulate: —

"Oh, not as a Frenchman, sir! I hate them so."

"There shows your Saxon blood," retorted

the other, laughing. "Well, you need not decide that point now. Only, if you are in danger — and you well may be — remember there is a way out for you. And, in general, talk little, talk only in French, and don't affect to understand an English word."

Jack did not find this advice hard to follow, since the language of the Palatinate was that adopted by King James's court during the marriage visit. There was much to amuse and interest him in this glimpse of a royal household. The pleasant days glided by in easy service of a handsome, gallant boy-master, — Frederick was but eighteen years old, — while Jack often wandered away by himself in the streets and alleys, reviving old memories of English customs and observing everything about him with keen eyes and, as Master Whitecombe had recommended, a silent tongue.

It was in returning from one such expedition that his attention was attracted to a knot of men gathered together in the road and directly in his path. There was considerable gesticulation and noise, with, when John drew nearer, another sound — a cry for help.

He ran forward.

Memory plays us queer tricks sometimes,

and she has a way of presenting a stored-up bit of knowledge occasionally at the instant of all others when it is most needed. As Jack chased down the narrow, ill lighted, foul smelling street, his thoughts were on the group before him, but there sounded in his ears, so distinctly that he seemed to hear his guardian speak the words: —

"Remember there is a way out for you. Talk little, talk only in French, and don't affect to understand an English word."

Then he found himself one of the vociferous crowd.

"What is the matter?" he asked, elbowing his way onward.

The nearest men looked towards him. None others paid any attention.

"The Palatine's livery," said one.

"A foreign fellow," remarked another, and they both pushed him aside.

But Jack had seen that a boy of about his own age was the centre of attraction. Around him clustered the men, while he shrank back, pale and cowering.

"Come, good Master Brownite," said a broad-shouldered ruffian. "Sing us a psalm, or preach us a sermon. Begin."

"Oh, gentle sirs" —

"Sing us a psalm," they chanted in rough chorus, "or preach us a sermon. Begin."

The lad actually started a tune. It was the signal for a salute from mud and stones and sticks, sent flying into his face by the brutal band of mockers.

Jack's eager good nature could endure no more. He pitched headlong into the open space with that other boy, his fists doubled, his eyes glowing.

"Do as I do," he said in French, and taking a place beside the attacked, he assumed an attitude of defiance.

It was not necessary to understand words thus accompanied. His action was imitated almost mechanically. The men — a dozen to the two — laughed insolently.

"A pretty pair of fighting cocks," sneered one, and reached out his great arm to sweep away the intruder.

Now the Palatine's suite were trained in every manly exercise. Young as Jack was he knew enough of fencing to avoid these awkward gestures, so that the man could neither seize nor intimidate him. He began stepping backward, his hand and eyes still alert, his feet taking him, little by little, in the direction of a neighboring wall. The other boy

followed his movements, but without Jack's haughty and confident bearing. He had the look of a coward and he carried himself like one.

"The little rogues would escape," cried some one. "Fall on them, men. Seize knives and staves, and show these Brownites and their friends of what sort are the London people."

Meanwhile Jack and his companion had reached the wall. The former pulled out his sword, set his shoulders against this defense, and with his left hand motioned the young Separatist to a station beside him.

"Down with the Frenchman," yelled their assailants. "Down with the Palatine's page!"

Attention was concentrating upon him. How long could he hold his own? The other lad gave no assistance, and the odds were tremendously against him.

"I must resort to strategy," thought Jack.

"He speaks no English," a ringleader said. "Jem, you there with your stick, approach, pretend to parley, then in a twinkling knock the sword from out his hand."

Jack's face was unchanged, although his companion turned white with terror.

"They will kill thee," he whimpered.

Still the page seemed not to understand. The burly scamp drew nearer. He made various feints at attack, calling out oaths and menaces. Suddenly he threw aside all pretense, and in good earnest his bludgeon fell. But not on Jack's sword: that flew to one side, flashed in the air, and descended. The champion was disarmed. With a courteous bow and that same immovable, uncomprehending face, John stooped to pick up the club. He restored it to its owner.

There was a roar of applause from those Englishmen, cruel, yet appreciating the beauty of a generous deed. They could even emulate it. Their ranks fell apart. "Go on, lads," they cried. "You are free. The Frenchman has won a release."

John seized the other by the hand and set off at full speed. It would not do to wait for a possible change of mind. When a safe distance was reached he asked: —

"Now, lad, whither away?" and he spoke in English.

"Thou art not French?"

"Of course I am not," impatiently. "But you — have I not seen you before? From the first, I thought there was something familiar in your face."

"It may be you saw me at court," said the other in a consequential voice. "I was there with my father yesterday, to arrange that I become of the princess's train on her marriage."

"So we are to be fellow servants," John observed, eying the boy in no very flattering spirit. "And your name?"

"Frank Billington. I thank you for your help but now, and yet,"—he drew himself up,—"doubtless, I could have managed in the end to fight my own way out."

"Doubtless you could," Jack assented, and gave a little laugh.

The festivities attending the royal wedding were about this time darkened by a rumor which flew from one to another; it was not long in filtering through the ranks of courtiers until the new page, Frank, brought it to Jack.

"It is said the Prince of Wales is very ill," he declared. "Men are prophesying he will not outlive the marriage of his sister."

"Then it was true," Jack asked, considerably startled, "that he fainted in church last Sunday?"

"Yes, it was the commotion we heard; they were carrying him out of the building. It

seems he has outgrown his strength and — Hush! Oh, here he comes at this moment!"

The boys started and sprang away from each other as if they had been detected in a crime. A very tall young man, slender and white-faced, with kind eyes and a gentle, sad expression, was strolling slowly towards them. They had seen the heir to the throne too often to be mistaken in his person. They drew back hurriedly, flattened themselves against the wall, and uncovered their heads till he should pass. But as Prince Henry came opposite to them, he was seized by a fit of coughing, which grew hoarser and more choking when he strove to repress it. Bright spots appeared upon either cheek: he was obliged to stop and surrender himself to the paroxysm. The piteous spectacle touched Jack's warm heart. He darted forward and bent his knee, his shoulder stooping as well. He bowed before the trembling figure.

"If your Royal Highness will lean on me," he said.

Henry drew the kerchief from his lips to thank the boy. Then, with his usual tact, and seeing a desire to be of assistance, he added: —

"Perhaps you will help me to my rooms? I cannot go farther now."

"Indeed, sir, I shall be glad to do so."

Delightedly Jack felt the weight upon his arm while the two moved slowly away together.

"You are accustomed to illness," the prince remarked. "I fear this usefulness was learned in some hard school, my child."

"It was our mother," John answered softly, "who needed such care many a time before God had pity on her sufferings and took her to Himself."

"As He is about to take me," Henry commented in solemn assurance. "What are you called, good friend?"

"John Chisholm, if it please your Highness."

"It does please me, for it is a right good Saxon name. So you are a subject of King James although you follow the Elector Palatine? I thank you, John," as they paused before his door, "for this aid to me." Henry laid his thin white hand on the boy's head and murmured a blessing. "Promise me," he then said, "that when you are of my sister's household, in a strange land, you will serve her as well." He regarded the lad earnestly.

Elizabeth was very dear to him. "Be faithful to her as you have opportunity. Promise me."

"I promise."

One day Jack was to keep that word.

CHAPTER VIII

CALLED TO BE KING

"HAVE you heard the news?" asked Frank Billington.

This was a favorite formula. He belonged to that class who betray a strange satisfaction in gossip, as if to be a human newspaper were cause for pride.

"What is it?" Jack inquired, stifling a yawn. He cared little for the bits of intelligence usually gathered in this way, — a new diversion, a new glory for Heidelberg, whose stately castle he now looked upon as he idled in the shade of the wall round its sunny garden. He never guessed how soon those splendid halls would be shattered in the relentless grasp of war. The busy, lively days had stretched away into years since the marriage of the Palatine to the Princess Elizabeth, and changes were at hand for all in the household at Trotz Kaiser.

"What is the news?" Jack repeated.

"The Bohemians have revolted."

"They have taken up arms against the emperor?"

Frank smiled. "They have taken up men. A party of them invaded the council-house, reproached the two councilors of regency with their oppressive conduct, and hot words ensued on both sides. Following, they say, an old Bohemian custom, they seized the men, and their secretary, Fabricus, and flung them out of the window."

Jack gave a scream of horror. "Were they killed?"

"No. Slavata was somewhat injured. Fabricus fell upon Martinitz, — it is said he apologized for his rudeness in so doing, — but a pile of rubbish broke the force of the descent. However, as Master Whitecombe remarked, by this act the country is committed to rebellion."

He spoke the truth. Those three men thrown out of the window involved Europe in a generation of bloodshed. From that May day dates the beginning of the Thirty Years' War.

"Now — who knows?" Frank added. "Our Pfalzgraf may be invited to accept the throne of Bohemia."

The boys looked at each other excitedly.

"Are they saying that already?" John asked.

"It is whispered about; yes. What a day it would be for the Palatinate!"

John ardently agreed. They did not comprehend the gravity of the situation, and felt only proud satisfaction when the Bohemian diet formally elected Frederick, Palatine of the Rhine, their king.

Ambassadors and letters arriving at Heidelberg added a new brilliancy to its life. Elizabeth urged on her husband to accept the honor. His mother was equally determined that he should refuse, and, naturally, Master Whitecombe was her mouthpiece to inform the boys.

"It is a sad muddle," he said, shaking his head over their exultation. "I hope we may not all be running our necks into a noose. Bohemia is moderate Catholic still, although she repudiates the Romanism of the Emperor Ferdinand, and prefers the Palatine. It will be a post requiring infinite tact and discretion. We must guard our words and deeds, every one of us, if we go" —

"If we go?" interrupted Frank in disgust. "Can there be any question whether the crown is accepted?"

"I am afraid not," was the man's sad answer, "although the Protestant League is almost the sole support upon which the Palatine can rely. But the Pfalzgrafin has determined to be queen, and I fancy she will carry the day."

Master Whitecombe read the situation correctly. After long indecision, with tears in his eyes, the irresolute, wavering Palatine signed the fateful agreement.

It was proposed to send his family to England. Charles, the present Prince of Wales, was sickly, and Frederick looked to his little son to attain that crown some day. He never thought it should be his grandson, who, as George I., was to leave Hanover, also called to be a king.

Elizabeth, however, to the relief of John and Frank, insisted upon accompanying her husband. While their joy was shaken by Master Whitecombe's doubts of the enterprise, they were still anxious to enter into it and see for themselves the result.

The dowager electress and, consequently, Jack's guardian, remained in the Palatinate when the long procession of carriages set out for the border. There the signing and sealing of charters followed, and then the frontier was passed.

The king and queen of Bohemia had come to their own. They were welcomed by cannon and bells and addresses as they entered Prague, the stately train winding slowly through the crowded streets.

When Jack cried out at the pageantry and the splendor of the town, Frank, that ever-wise one, replied : —

" All this is the new part of the city — so they say. The old Prague, across the Moldau, is plain and solemn, its people are rustic and uncouth. It is to be hoped that his Majesty will not choose from those nobles to wait in the royal household."

But Frederick made that very choice. Our pages were diverted by the blunders of the untrained servitors ; and yet Jack remembered his guardian's parting admonition, and was fretted at the general outspoken amusement :

" Be sure," the old courtier had said, " to show every sign of respect to those Bohemians. There is no one of you, no matter how obscure, who may not influence public sentiment. The Jesuits call Frederick a Snow King, who will melt by spring. Don't throw any bit of fuel on the fire to which he must be exposed."

On Saint Elizabeth's Day the court were

considerably surprised by the appearance of a party of burgher wives who brought gifts of bread and cake to their sovereign. Her Majesty received them with that fascination of manner which she inherited from her grandmother, Mary of the Scots. She ordered wine to be offered her guests, and accordingly a party of servants moved, with some difficulty, through the throng.

"See," muttered Frank, touching John on the shoulder. "See the fellow at the queen's elbow. Look at his tray."

Jack rolled his eyes in that direction without moving his head. The Bohemian stood, so absorbed in the lively scene before him that he had failed to notice his salver was empty, the dishes having slipped from it to the floor. Jack smiled. Then he saw some women about him were smiling too, that others were blushing and hanging their heads, that all were gazing intently in his direction. What could it mean?

He swept a comprehensive glance around him. Surely there was indignation in those furtive looks, even among the laughers. What had happened to rouse their wrath? In its scrutiny his eye fell upon Frank Billington. And now he knew. The youth had

twisted a roll from the visitors' naïve offering into the appearance of a feather, and so had stuck it into his cap. Fortunately he had been noticed by only some half dozen of the women. If Jack could screen the impertinence before it were more widely remarked, no great harm might be done. He slipped directly in Frank's way, so that his tall form hid the slighter figure.

"Leave the room," he whispered. "Quick! There is a door not two steps away."

"Why should I leave the room?" was the pettish retort. "I am enjoying myself too well where I am."

"Then take that thing from your head," Jack entreated. "Frank, be a good fellow, and do as I say! The women are furious at the insult."

Frank grinned. "A lot of savages," he answered. "I don't care what they think."

"But you must care," John repeated. "We must all care! Too much depends upon it."

"John Chisholm," — the sweet, clear tones of his queen broke in upon their conference, — "bring me a cup of wine," said Elizabeth.

John trembled. Should he move aside he must display the impudent decoration of his fellow page, so that all the guests might be

free to witness and retail the offense. Yet he could not hesitate for an instant when a royal command was issued.

"Will you take off your cap?" he asked.

"I will not."

"In that case I must do it for you."

He swung his tray about. The winecups upon it were overturned, the golden liquor streamed to the floor. Ladies' gowns were splashed and Jack's fine clothes were ruined. But Frank Billington's headgear lay, unnoticed, at their feet.

In the midst of the little excitement Jack flew to the board and grasped a wine-flask. He hurried to her Majesty, really only a moment belated by the happening. The moment had been long enough to anger even so gentle a woman as Elizabeth. Or, rather, the apparent carelessness mortified her vanity, since she was prone to complain of the new house-servants, and contrast them with the ease and grace of Billington and Chisholm.

"You are intolerably clumsy," she said now in her coldest tone. "No," waving away the drink, "I wish nothing at your hands."

"Aha, my spoilsport," was Frank's salute when John, thus peremptorily dismissed, sought the door he had recommended to the

other; "what have you gained by your interference? Only sharp words for your part, and I'll have my fun in some other way!"

"The worst of it is," thought John, groping his way up the dark stairs to his room, "he speaks the truth. For he will have his fun!"

A noise in the street outside caused him to thrust his head from the first landing-window to investigate its source. A party from the palace, headed by the chaplain, were gathered before a street shrine. As John looked down he saw rude hands laid upon it.

He turned away with a heavy frown.

"Yet his Majesty promised to protect the State religion, and they had trust in his word. Oh, where will all this end? And can there be any end save one?"

Only one, and it was very near.

CHAPTER IX

THE BRIDGE OF MOLDAU

Despite this friction between court and people, the king and queen were personally all that loyal subjects could desire. Their gracious dignity was the pride of the simple, uneducated Czechs, who made rich presents to the baby in November received rapturously as the first prince ever born in Prague.

"All the common folk have permission to view the royal child," Frank Billington complained.

"And see what they leave behind them," was John's rejoinder.

The room through which they were passing was filled with these good-will offerings. The Jews of Prague gave a silver dish, in the form of a ship; a number of ladies, a cradle of ivory and ebony, ornamented with gems and silver gilt. The citizens had sent a silver bowl running over with pieces of gold. John's eyes fell upon one gift after another, and came back to the scornful expression of his fellow courtier.

"And our return for this," said he, "is to insult their faith by hewing in pieces that beautiful crucifix in the cathedral; to trample upon their relics, and to smite their painted saints with the sword."

Frank was stupidly literal. "We had no hand in it. It was Chaplain Scultetus and his following."

"We stand or fall with the others. And what is hateful in our sight is dear to the Bohemian Christians."

Frank listened in disdain: "I meant," he began, "to tell you of an adventure for to-night, but I see you have no sympathy with such doings. It were better not to let you into the secret."

"What is it?" demanded Jack.

"Oh, no. You are half Catholic already; or a Hussite, perhaps. You will not relish an act of piety, such as this pleasant frolic."

Jack had not lived with Frank Billington all these years without learning that any act of piety would fail to interest him unless it came in the form of a frolic. He dreaded the combination these phrases promised.

"Ah, tell me what it is," he implored. "I would do as much for you."

Frank pressed his lips together. "No.

Your chance is gone. I dare not reveal it to a spoilsport."

"At least I can follow and watch," thought John. "Perhaps — though I fear not — I may be able to interfere. It was difficult to convince the citizens that the king was not responsible for the destruction of the cathedral ornaments. It would be impossible to explain another such act. And this looks very like more of that same mischievous zeal."

He shared his sleeping apartment with Frank, and lay for a long time that night waiting for a move on the part of the other.

An hour before midnight Frank rose quietly, donned his clothes in the darkness, and stole out of the room. Jack was not long in following him. Keeping the shadowy form in sight, he, too, crept down the stairway, through the long halls, seeing, now and then, a door open and a figure join that in advance, until a score of men had collected. All were silent, all armed with axes and hammers, which they hid beneath their cloaks. They were headed by Chaplain Scultetus.

Outside the palace, their steps turned towards the river. Jack, gliding on behind them, in the shade of the houses, began to suspect their errand. The Moldau bridge was famous

in Bohemian history. Its borders were lined by twenty-eight immense images, which had been erected by prominent families, and were of sentimental and monetary value. An ancient crucifix crowned this edifice, known to be the city's dearest possession. Herr Sculte-tus often inveighed against its decorations, but Frederick turned a deaf ear, although Elizabeth hearkened the more complaisantly because she detested that crossing, with its unsightly outlook.

"It's odd enough to think," reflected John, groping along in the darkness, "that nothing angers Prague against our queen except her dislike for the bridge of Moldau. And the people would forgive any injury sooner than an insult offered there."

He was confident that this was the mission of the armed company, nor did he see, thus far, what he could do to prevent it. There was no time to go back to the palace and rouse some more influential member of the household, so he kept on his way, determined to be guided absolutely by circumstances. He saw the party stop to parley with a sentry. The man passed them, and John met him.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"A soldier from the palace has relieved

me," was the reply. "I am to report at the guardhouse."

John considered the case rapidly. Here was a messenger who might bring assistance in time, if he could manage to hold back for a little the iconoclasts upon the bridge. He took tablets from his pocket, and wrote a few words.

"Take this to the court first," he said, "and manage — no matter how — that it comes to the hands of the king. Be swift and do as I tell you. It concerns what is near the hearts of every man in the city."

He spoke so impressively that the ignorant soldier was awed, and promised obedience. John gave him a coin, and saw him depart on a run.

Then he hastened his steps once more, for he was losing precious time. The others were assembled upon the bridge, Frank standing nearest to him. He had cast aside his cloak, and drawn out his heavy axe. With one arm he grasped an image by its standard, when Jack sprang forward and fell on him, catching him round the waist.

"The guard are roused!" he breathed in his companion's ear. "They will tear you in pieces if they see what you are doing."

Frank uttered a groan of alarm. Without a word in reply, he dropped his weapon and fled. Jack picked up the axe, and dashed down the bridge, giving cry to the warning which had so frightened his fellow page : —

" The guard are roused ! they will tear you in pieces if they see what you are doing."

Some of the men followed Frank's example ; most of them were of sterner stuff, the stuff of which reformers are made.

" Then we die in a good cause," said Herr Scultetus, whose sentiment was received by a shout of Amen. Happily, the disturbance drove them from their first work — that of overthrowing the images. The chaplain alone did not involuntarily fall back. But now John, too, was armed, and he ran to the cross. Taking his stand before it, he lifted his axe.

" I am to be reckoned with," he called. " You must kill me first if you would lay hand upon the crucifix."

The chaplain peered into his face. " I thought I recognized that voice," said he. " It is indeed young Chisholm. Why, lad, John Robinson's pupil is no Papist ? "

" And no Hussite. But I am a subject of King Frederick. I guard his honor."

The good minister answered gently, "As to that I know far better than you."

"And the king knows best of all," retorted Jack. "He never commanded that you destroy the idols of Prague."

Even while he spoke, two scenes, two widely different scenes, came up before his mind. One was that when the dying Prince Henry, bending to bless his little attendant, begged him to serve his sister faithfully.

"I serve her to-night," he thought.

The other was of his parents' flight from England. He saw again that picture of despair, he heard once more, in memory, the anguished cries, the jeering triumph of their persecutors. And here was he, a Separatist who had suffered for his belief, guarding the crucifix of the Papists upon the Moldau bridge.

Herr Scultetus broke in upon his revery. "Enough of fooling," he said, pushing up against the youth. "Men, here! Drop all else, and seize the fellow."

They pressed forward. Jack raised his axe.

"I shall strike," he warned.

But another weapon was lifted to meet his. A half-dozen burly forms surrounded him. Between them all they pulled him down, and

held him fast, while from the ground he heard the rapid strokes as they fell upon the cross. He looked up and saw the gigantic statue waver, totter over the brink, and fall heavily. It sank in the river below.

Jack gave a low cry of despair, which was answered by a shout from the shore. Lights twinkled, there was the clatter of arms, they could hear the sound of flying feet. The little band on the bridge waited with a dauntless front the soldiers of the king.

"We have but done our duty," said the chaplain.

And then they were surrounded by the party from the palace.

Jack was awakened, at daybreak, by an uproar that filled the street. The crucifix had been missed, and there was danger of a riot at the loss. He heard the loud voice of Count Schlick, on the steps, reading a proclamation which set forth that his Majesty was ignorant of what had happened, and that the images should be spared. The crowd listened in silence and finally dispersed, sullen and murmuring.

And now Frederick could no longer shut his eyes to the imminent peril of his position against the emperor's forces. He endeavored

to raise an army, only to find that his people had not the faintest notion of obedience. The Protestant League was won over; he was left almost alone to fight for his crown. Little Henry Frederick, the heir, had been dispatched into Friesland, although his mother refused to leave Prague, poorly fortified as was the town.

"I have enlisted in the army," Frank announced on one of these bustling days, — "Have you sent in your name yet? I knew you would not be far behind me."

There was a dreadful moment of silence. Then Jack blurted out in his usual headlong fashion: —

"I have joined the life-guard."

Frank stared at him as if he could not believe his ears. "And you stay in Prague?"

"I stay with her Majesty."

The young soldier raised his brows significantly. "Well," said he in a meditative drawl, "I don't doubt it is the part of caution. You will be quite safe with her."

Jack half drew his sword. "That remains to be seen," he cried, his eyes flashing. "I am not skulking behind a woman for protection. If I choose — and I do choose — to serve in Queen Elizabeth's guard, it is because

I believe there will be warm work in Prague before many months are passed."

He could not bring himself to tell this unsympathetic listener his reasons for the act: that it was his old promise to Prince Henry which kept him from the battlefield and placed him in a false position of apparent timidity.

After a sad celebration of the Holy Communion, Frederick departed to the front. Word quickly followed of the advance of Tilly's army; Bohemia was overrun by a merciless foe.

CHAPTER X

THE SNOW KING MELTS

THE loneliness of Jack's position was enhanced by the fact that he was the only Englishman in the life-guard. However, the queen sometimes talked with him, in those days of waiting, seeming to feel that a fellow countryman, no matter how lowly his position, was the person to whom she should naturally turn for sympathy.

"This Tilly," said she, "reminds me of my old nurse's tales on the doughty deeds of a Highland chieftain. Not that any chieftain" (the daughter of Scotland's last king drew herself up proudly) "should be compared with an Hungarian villain. But there is the like dread, the like rack and ruin are left behind him. Beautiful Bohemia will be a waste place wherever he has trod."

"Not if our king can guard his own," said Jack stoutly. "And, madam, he has brave men beside him."

Elizabeth bowed assent. "Brave and true

men," she answered. "Surely his Majesty must yet drive out these pestilent fellows, and possess his home in peace."

She spoke courageously, as Jack had spoken. But neither looked at the other, since each knew that the words were a vain boast.

They were interrupted now by the rattle of drums and blare of trumpets. The queen started, her ladies flew to her side, and the guard at the door, the young Englishman before her, drew their swords. There was an instant of suspense, broken by hasty steps on the stairs and along the corridor. The king, booted, spurred, a striking figure in his military dress and bearing, burst impetuously into the room.

"All is well, my love," he cried, catching his wife in his arms. "I saw my opportunity, and hastened back for one more glimpse of you before the battle."

"There will be a battle at once?" asked Elizabeth.

The attendants drew nearer, awaiting his answer.

"Within forty-eight hours there must be one. The enemy are close at hand."

Jack softly left the room. He soon found that their foes were encamped upon White

Hill before Prague. It was afterwards learned that a Dominican friar walked back and forth before the troops, urging them on, and holding a mutilated image aloft. His cry was: —

"See what they have done to the Holy Virgin. Her prayers will be with you!"

The sight roused them all to instant work of destruction. Frederick attended church on that Sunday, seating himself at his dinner, afterwards, as calmly as if he were in his old castle on the Rhine. The meal was brought to an abrupt close by a sound there was no mistaking. The boom of cannon echoed in the city streets.

"It is a salute, merely a salute," the king declared, glancing at his wife. "There is no danger."

"Go," said Elizabeth. "If there is a movement concerted you should be there, to place yourself at its head. Go without delay!"

She feared more than she expressed, and his own face was pale, though resolute, as he mounted his horse and galloped away. The tumult increased. Frederick could presently see a desperate conflict waging upon White Hill. Anhalt came from out the smoke and fire as the king passed through the gate.

"The day is lost!" he called. "Your Majesty must save yourself."

Frederick's first consideration was to order that there should be free ingress for the fugitives to the city. After that, he hastened back to the palace. At last Jack found the time for action had come even to him. The king directed his court to fly to the old town, and instantly all was in the utmost confusion. Elizabeth laughed hysterically when, at the moment of her carriage's departure, Jack came clattering down the steps, shouting to the coachman to halt.

"Has he your jewels?" inquired the king, seeing that he held a bundle aloft.

"I don't know. We cannot wait — not for the crown itself." She laughed once more, in her mirthless way. "Drive on," she commanded the servant.

The wheels began to revolve.

"It is too late," said Elizabeth from the window.

"Not too late, thank Heaven," Jack replied.

He swung the bundle into her lap. The queen saw in her arms the rosy face, now ominously scowling, of her baby Rupert. In the general scramble he would have been left

behind had it not been for her life-guardsman.

The carriage rolled on along the street and over the bridge that she had detested. A passer-by called shrilly: —

"Aha, your Majesty is glad enough to cross it now!"

They halted at the house of a loyal citizen, in the comparative safety of old Prague, where they were visited by Bohemian nobles, who implored Frederick to hold the town until his allies should relieve him. He responded that he would not subject his wife, nor the place, to the horrors of a siege. Count Thurm volunteered to keep the bridge for a day against the entire opposing army, but Frederick refused the noble offer, and their train set out.

John rode up and down the interminable line, listening to the complaints of the ladies, and admiring the quiet courage of his queen, who alone was silent. In the throng he finally encountered Frank. They had not met before since the day one stayed behind and the other cantered away to the seat of war.

"We are in a pretty plight," grumbled his compatriot. "Their Majesties are homeless wanderers, and you and I cast adrift."

John could not repress a smile at the characteristic selfishness of this intelligence. "We must not think of the future," he observed dryly. "All other considerations are swallowed up in the greater misfortunes of our master."

"I don't see," urged Frank, "why we should be forgotten entirely. I pity the king, yet I must remember, too, that there is nothing for me but to go back to England and to the dull life of my father's house."

Jack turned upon him suddenly, with a new resolve to speak. "You reckon that a hardship over which to whimper. Hearken to what mine has been!"

"Yours? You have been safe at her Majesty's side, with nothing to endure."

"Do you think so? Then listen, I say, to my story. In the first days of the campaign a letter came to me. It was sent by that dear brother whom I thought dead. He had sought news of me in Leyden, and wished to follow to the court. I saw our impending fate. I could not quit my post, nor could I urge him on into a like peril. So I bade him good-by with my greeting. I did not see Hugh. I may never see him now."

"And why not?"

"He has gone back before this to South Virginia. His future home is there."

Frank was deeply impressed. "That was a real trial, I grant you," said he.

"Nor was it all," John continued. "A little later another letter arrived, this time from Master Brewster. He told me many of the Leyden Independents were to sail for the New World in the early summer. He begged me to join them where they are to establish a colony in Virginia."

"And your choice was to stay in Prague?"

"My choice?" Jack thundered. "No! It was my duty to stay in Prague. More than this; Stephen, the only other kin to me in all the world, is gone. He sailed with Master Brewster."

"Both your brothers are in Virginia?"

"Yes, both now. I am alone. But we serve our king; that is my one comfort — let it comfort you."

After such a confidence Frank could not, in decency, complain of his lot. The Dutch castle of Rhenen was given to Frederick and Elizabeth by the Prince of Orange. Neither husband nor wife was spared endless jests at the expense of their brief reign. Caricatures commemorated the two straying about as beg-

gars, — Frederick with a staff, and Elizabeth carrying a cradle. A popular song began : —

"If you but know, pray tell to me
Where the lost Palatine may be."

There was no need for Frank and John to linger on in this more modest household. They obtained their freedom, were thanked for their past services with the unfailing graciousness of the unfortunate couple, and left behind them forever the life of a royal palace. They traveled to Leyden, where John sought out Master Robinson, Frank going on to his own home.

"We have endured much together," he observed. "I trust that we do not part now for all time. It may be — who knows? — that we shall meet somewhere in Virginia. I have not heard from my father for a long time past, but his last letter showed that he was thinking of emigration. When all is said, England is no place for a Separatist."

"I am afraid," said Jack slowly, "that another course lies before me now."

"Yet you, too, should be glad to flee from the religious fury that is waging even in the Netherlands."

"Very true. Still — what if that fury pointed out work for me to do?"

Frank looked puzzled, but John could not be induced to say more.

As Master Whitecombe remained with the dowager Electress, John Robinson received the young fellow, and his wife made him feel again, after years of desolate grandeur, the pleasures of a home. Yet he was not surprised, from what he had learned of affairs here, that his old pastor should say to him without delay: —

"Do you remember Heer Grotius, who often visited your father, and conferred with him over pamphlets to be printed?"

John smiled. He was sure of what was coming. "I remember him very well, and his wife, too. I was grieved to hear of Barneveld's execution, and that Mynheer had been thrown into prison in the great religious dispute. But, Master Robinson, you sided, did you not, with the Calvinists in that famous controversy?"

"My belief was against Grotius and the other Arminians. My sympathy was with them in their persecution. John, would you help poor Madame Grotius? She is sorely in need of help."

"I should be glad to give it."

"If so, any effort must be made at once.

The poor prisoner is languishing in Lowenstein."

"Is there thought of rescue?" asked John bluntly. "Some way I have hoped as much."

The clergyman smiled, and laid his finger on his lip. He looked about him, as if afraid of listeners, and repeated, for sole answer: —

"Hope on, hope ever."

CHAPTER XI

IN A BOX

"GOOD-MORNING, Vrouw van Groot," said Jack cheerily. "I have come for your decision."

A pretty little woman was bustling about the kitchen of the castle. She cast a quick glance at the youth.

"Not so loud," she whispered.

"We are alone. Governor Deventer is absent, and his wife busy in the outer room. Now seems the day for the attempt. What does your husband think?"

"Oh, I don't know! The risks are so terrible! Neither he nor I can feel that it is wise to try this way."

"It is only shrinking from the decisive step," Jack reassured her. "Remember that the scheme is well thought out. Deventer has become accustomed to seeing the big box go full of books to be changed for others. Every such carriage of the chest confirmed him in the habit of not even glancing at the

contents. When he is away, surely Vrouw Deventer would not break through the rule."

Madame van Groot was shivering with agitation. "Yes," she assented. "There may be small chance of discovery. But suppose he should be smothered?"

"We could decide as to that if I might but get to his room." John knit his brows in thought. "I have it! I am determined that the governor's wife shall give me leave to help carry the chest — it will lessen the danger — and perhaps I can coax her into winking at my packing the books. I 'll try."

An hour later, as the prisoner sat at breakfast with his wife and another member of his household, Elsje van Houwening, he was more pleased than surprised at the entrance of the ally of whom Madame van Groot had told him.

They clasped each other's hand in earnest sympathy. All understood that the long-looked-for moment of trial had come. The nervous little wife flitted aimlessly to and fro about the rooms.

The girl was tumbling the huge volumes out of the chest.

"Vrouw Daatselaer will receive him?" said John. "You have made sure of that?"

"Yes, yes," Grotius himself responded. "I shall be safe if I can but get to Gorcum."

He was much less excited than either of his confederates, who proceeded to dispose him in the box. It was neither broad nor deep, and not four feet long. However, they made him as comfortable as possible, with a book for a pillow and some hanks of yarn and rolls of paper about his body to prevent concussion.

Madame van Groot shut the box, locked it, and kissed the keyhole.

"God be with thee, love," she whispered. "Farewell! Elsje," in a louder tone, "ring the soldiers to carry down the chest."

Two men appeared at the summons.

"The juffrouw van Houwening," announced the prisoner's wife, "will accompany the box, and young Master Chisholm has permission to join her."

John seized an end of the chest, and the men took the other.

"Phew!" exclaimed one. "It is as heavy as if the Arminian himself were inside."

"Arminian books are said to be heavy," Madame van Groot replied quickly.

Again and again while they traversed the passages, and went slowly through the thir-

teen doorways, the soldier uttered the same exclamation. John and Elsje were well-nigh maddened by the repetition : —

"It is as heavy as if the Arminian were inside."

Each time that the sentence was used, one or the other turned it off with a joke. They did not hazard even the exchange of a glance. It seemed to John and to the girl that they were never to reach the outer air.

But first there was the most pressing of all dangers to face, in the scrutiny the governor's wife must give the box.

"Here we are," John said. "It's a precious load, I tell you! Do you want to peep into it?"

"It is as heavy," growled the soldier, "as if the Arminian himself were inside."

"I wonder," Vrouw Deventer fingered the keys at her girdle, "if I ought to look it over."

"Heer Deventer never does," protested Elsje a good deal too hastily.

The governor's wife gave her a surprised stare.

"Nevertheless, I may think it best," she answered coolly, and found the key on the ring.

John's heart gave a choking throb. He

heard Elsje draw in her breath. "Perhaps it would be better if you did look," he said. "You can satisfy yourself that nothing is amiss. And it will do the old books good to have the dust shaken off. I sneezed myself nearly blind when we were laying those aside that were to be kept here."

His sole reliance was that this speech might alarm the neat Dutch housewife, who was dressed in her finery in expectation of visitors. The governor's wife shrank back, an expression of horror upon her features.

"It is of no consequence," she declared, replacing the key. "I am in something of a hurry. You may go on."

The confederates hid every trace of exultation, as the chest was shouldered and they moved away again. Rain fell fast. The box was set under shelter on the boat. John soon found an officer seated upon it, whistling a tune to which he was drumming and kicking an accompaniment.

"Did you ever hear, sir," the youth asked respectfully, "of the Delft ware that's so much prized?"

"Yes, of course. Why, is there any such in this box?"

John looked mysterious. "I'm not at

liberty to tell," he answered. "But its contents are valuable, and easily harmed. That's all."

Next a soldier and his wife strolled up to the group standing near. One of them caught sight of the chest, and was reminded of a story he had heard in which a criminal escaped in a coffin.

"Why, Grotius might be hidden away here," said the woman.

"Suppose I get a gimlet," her husband jested, "and run it into the Arminian."

Before John could answer this unexpected speech Elsje's voice broke in from where she had joined the circle: "It would be a good long gimlet that could reach from here to his quarters in Lowestein."

The idle talk changed its course, but neither of the watchers left their charge, after that alarm, until the landing was made at Gorcum. Here John hunted up a man with a barrow, while Elsje kept an eye on the chest. The heavy load was adjusted.

"Something moved in this box," cried the man who was pushing it.

"Arminian books are full of life," was Elsje's retort.

In the tedious course of time they reached

their destination. John superintended the bestowal of the chest in a back room, while Elsje went on into the shop. Vrouw Daatslaer, her mistress's friend, stood behind the counter dealing out ribbons and thread to customers.

"What can I do for you, Mejuffrouw?" she asked.

Elsje leaned across the board. "Heer van Groot is in the kitchen," she whispered.

Vrouw Daatslaer turned ghastly pale. She commanded herself by a tremendous effort, and beckoned an assistant to take her place; then she hastened away, followed close by Elsje. They found John leaning over the chest.

"I have knocked," he murmured, looking up at them, "and I can get no answer."

Elsje now gave way entirely. "It was of no avail! He is dead," she sobbed.

"Open the chest," said a muffled voice.

John turned the key, and threw back the cover. Grotius staggered out into the room. Vrouw Daatslaer did not pause to greet him before she flew to a trap-door.

"Don't say a word, but hide at once, Mynheer," she urged. "In this cellar you will be quite safe."

There she brought him food, afterwards seeking her brother-in-law, a rich merchant, who came immediately to the house, accompanied by a mason, with garments for a disguise. This John Lamberten helped Jack to dress Grotius in clothing that did not suit his pale face and delicate hands, as they told him, laughing like children together, smearing him with mortar and dust, and slouching his hat over his forehead. Then Jack donned a similar outfit, whereupon they set off to the Merevede ferry with the merchant.

"There will be no crossing in this weather," began the ferryman.

"Tell him," said the tradesman, "that you must get to Altona to-day, Lamberten, and that I will pay any price — any price, mind — to see you safely across."

This offer made all the difference in the world. Without further parley Lamberten and the two fugitives were taken over the stream, and a wagon was hired by the mason to carry them to Antwerp.

Now they were upon Spanish soil, and from here Grotius proceeded to Paris. Madame van Groot joined him in the course of a few weeks, while John secretly returned to Gorcum, and to a talk with Elsje over her future course.

They had been thrown constantly together, and had come to know each other so well, that a deep interest was sprung up between them. He felt that he should be guided somewhat by her decisions, but found she was not prepared to follow the van Groots into France.

"They do not need me there," she observed, "and my aunt has the first claim to my services. She is about to emigrate to the Mauritius, whither she wishes me to accompany her."

John looked mournful. "Every one goes to Virginia," said he. For Mauritius was the first name of the Hudson River, and much of the Atlantic seaboard was known as Virginia. "Sooner or later, my friends all leave me for the New World."

"It is the best place," Elsje answered, "for those who, like you and me, become entangled in politics at home. You must hide, as Mynheer's accomplice, if you stay in Holland. Why are you left behind?"

He started up. "It is true. I am my own master now, and I see no further reason — Elsje, should you like it if I joined the party to Fort Manhattan? Would you approve of the plan?"

She adjusted a ribbon deliberately.

"It seems a good plan," she said.

CHAPTER XII

A GAME OF PALL MALL

And now we must retrace our steps and follow the fortunes of another of the three brothers. Thus we shall discover not only how he came to be among the Pilgrims, but also by whose aid he was helped upon the way.

For Stephen Chisholm, although he did not guess it, the whole course of life was altered by what took place one summer morning. And the change began with a conversation: —

"Mother," asked the child, "is Filippo Concini the king?"

Madame Benoît laughed: "No, Stephen. What put that notion into your head? You have often seen his Majesty."

Probably Stephen's ideas on the subject were very confused.

"Filippo acts like a king," he said stubbornly. "I thought — perhaps — his Majesty was only regent now."

This remark elicited a peal of merriment which brought another listener. A little, fragile woman, a veil pinned about her pale face, softly entered the room.

"Ah, my good Benoît," she observed, "you are enjoying some fine joke with Stephen. If it is not an interruption, will you be so kind as to look over this lace for me?"

She handed a package to Madame Benoît, who colored angrily at the manner rather than the words. It was hard for her to forget, when thus condescendingly treated, that Lenora Concini was only the queen regent's waiting-maid before Marie de Medici's blind partiality pushed forward the favorite and her husband. And now the Benoîts were part of the retinue of the Marquis d'Ancre, marshal of France. Madame Benoît was still so obviously smiling while she took the lace that the marquise inquired the cause.

"It is little Stephen here," was the answer. "He asked me just now if your son were not the king. He says Filippo behaves as if he were."

Lenora always carried about with her a bit of wax, as employment for her twitching

fingers. At this speech she rolled it nervously into a ball between thumb and palm, eying, meanwhile, the sturdy boy who steadfastly returned her gaze.

"Filippo is a foolish child," remarked the marquise. "I fear he is sometimes lordly with you, Stephen. You must try to forgive him, and if you two could be friends, I should be very glad."

She extended her hand, which Stephen promptly kissed. Her sad smile appealed to him. "I will, madam," he answered. "I don't mind at all when he cuffs me. But he never can make me kiss his hand — no! — although I am glad to kneel to you."

"Filippo shall not strike you again," his mother promised. "Nor need you ever bow to him. Now, run away, my child. The king — the only king here — is making candy. I think he will give a morsel to little boys who happen into his kitchen."

Lenora felt always apprehensive of a turn in the absurd state of affairs by which two servants had become the true rulers of France. She now called her son to her, warned him of the possible result of his folly, and bade him change his demeanor towards Stephen Chisholm.

"The English savage!" sneered Filippo.

"No matter. Those English are good friends; remember that! And no one can tell when we may need a friend."

"Why, mother," he insisted, "every one says my father is the most powerful man in the kingdom."

"That is true — to-day," she answered. "It is the part of wisdom to make friends for to-morrow."

Stephen was considerably surprised, accordingly, at the courtesy of Filippo's manner when he entered the royal kitchen. A sickly slender youth stood over the fire, stirring the contents of a silver saucepan. He smiled languidly on his boy guests.

"Would you like a taste?" said the king.

Both approached him, opening their mouths like fledgeling birds. Louis dipped up a little syrup on the tip of a spoon, and held it out, first to one and then to the other waiting lad.

"Is it good?" he asked.

"Sire," Filippo replied, "it is the daintiest sweet that ever passed my lips."

Louis glanced towards Stephen. He shook his yellow head.

"It is scorched," said he.

The royal cook dropped the spoon, with a

clatter, back into the saucepan. "Then you wish for no more," he answered coldly, "and we need not detain you further. That will do. You may go."

Stephen hung his head. "Yet I told the truth," he thought.

As he crept out of the room, abashed and conscious of Filippo's smile, he was met by a charming girl, who playfully extended her arms so that he could not pass.

"Whither away?" she called. "Is your cooking done for the morning?"

Stephen bowed low. "Your Majesty," said he sadly, "I made bold to say it was too much done."

Louis's child wife shrieked with laughter: "And so you have been exiled, little plain-speaker?"

"Yes, madam. But I don't mind — much."

"Don't mind it at all," said she, tossing back her yellow hair. "I will find the king and Filippo — is Filippo with his Majesty? — and we shall play pall mall together. The candy may go for the present."

So the four met on the terrace outside the lodge of Compiègne, while members of the court drew near to see the game, one much resembling croquet. Among the bystanders

was a youth of military bearing, with fair hair and sharp, dark eyes, his white face already creased by heavy lines. Stephen recognized him, but did not guess that Richelieu was the greatest man the time and the land were to bring forth.

"We play against each other?" the king asked his wife.

She assented. Then she added mischievously: —

"Which of these small gentlemen will be my partner? You boys may settle it for yourselves."

There was a moment's pause. Anne was a poor player; awkward though her husband was in most things, he could wield the mallet well. Stephen and Filippo knew this, and they were little fellows — such little fellows to be placed in a position where they must choose between king and queen, between the head of the realm and a lady who was not dearly loved by France, between failure and success in the game!

Filippo noticed his mother in the group, and remembered her advice to make friends for the morrow. They arrived at their decision at the same instant. He sprang to the king, Stephen bounded towards the queen.

Each knelt before his partner, while the Italian cried: —

"My liege must always be the first choice of his servant!"

There was loud applause. Anne regarded her small champion steadfastly.

"Why have you come to me?" she said.

Louis leaned on his mallet and waited. Richelieu craned his neck. Every one expected that the downright English lad would speak the exact truth. He kissed the queen's lovely hand.

"I always choose the woman," said he.

Again there was a round of applause. Yet Anne continued to smile in that teasing way of hers.

"Is that all?" she asked.

"Well," acknowledged Stephen reluctantly, "it's more fun, too, to have the good player against one."

Louis shouted with delight. The queen, though her cheeks grew scarlet, was forced to join in his laugh.

"That is a peculiar trait," said she, "which we Southerners cannot always comprehend: these Northern barbarians take the weaker side, not alone from pity, but because they do like the struggle."

She glanced towards Richelieu, who gravely inclined his head.

"It is true, madame," he said. "And the characteristic makes good stuff for friendship. I advise your Majesty to keep your little ally in mind. Even he may prove useful in time to come."

Filippo caught his mother's significant gesture. He did not understand what it was all about, nor why this simple and obscure comrade should be recommended, first to him and now to the queen — the queen!

Before nightfall the Benoîts were amazed by two applications for the services of their little son. Louis and Anne each desired the boy as page. In that network of intrigue enveloping the court it was not strange that honor and honesty, even in so unformed a character, should attract attention. Since one sovereign, in either event, must be refused, this was a predicament where the man could not hope to be forgiven should he behave as Stephen had done. His wife, too, was troubled even through her pride in the favored child. She knit her brows reflectively.

"I have it, Gaston!" she exclaimed, after a period of thought. "Let me go to the

queen regent with the whole story. Perhaps she will take Stephen herself. In that case, neither her son nor her daughter-in-law could object."

Happily Marie was agreed, and Stephen was thus separated from his adopted parents by introduction into another life not at all to his taste. The elder queen was a tall, large woman, red faced and harsh of voice, whose stern manner did not endear her to her youthful servant, although he bore with her sullen despotism uncomplainingly. One morning as he quitted her presence he saw that he was followed by the Marquise d'Ancre. She beckoned him into an alcove.

"Stephen, I want to speak to you," she began, "and I beg you to tell me the truth." The wax ball in her fingers moved like lightning back and forth. "You will tell me the truth, won't you, Stephen?"

Her voice was entreating; there were tears in her eyes.

"I cannot understand you, madame," said Stephen. "Don't I always speak the truth?"

"I believe you do. But this — you might be afraid of causing me pain. I have already questioned Filippo, and," she gave a sharp sigh, "I cannot rely on his answer."

"What about?" demanded Stephen.

"About the occurrence yesterday in the billiard hall. I know my husband took a liberty with his Majesty. And this new favorite, De Luynes, was there to profit by it. I cannot learn precisely what occurred. Think!" the poor woman clasped her hands together. Her ball of wax rolled to the floor unheeded. "What falsehood is in the air we breathe when I must go for the truth to a child, and that child not my own!"

She spoke to herself, but Stephen replied: —

"I will tell you all there was of it — every word. The king was playing billiards, and the marquis looking on. It was draughty there — you know how it is? M. the Marquis placed his hat on his head."

"Placed his hat on his head?" shrieked Lenora.

"Yes. He asked: 'Your Majesty will pardon me?' and placed his hat on his head."

"And the king?"

"Said nothing. He looked grave, still he said nothing whatever."

"And De Luynes?"

"He — well, he glanced towards his Majesty, but neither did he speak."

Lenora was as white as her gown.

"Madness! madness!" she muttered. "It was suicide. Concini's head must go off with his hat. Nothing can save us now."

CHAPTER XIII

DOWN THE LADDER

A FEW days after this conversation Filippo accosted Stephen.

"Let us go to the royal rooms," he said, "and see the butcher-birds De Luynes is training. My father thinks hawking is the best amusement he ever permitted his Majesty to indulge in."

It was true that Louis was engrossed by his hawks and merlins. While he prepared for the hunt he allowed the boys to inspect the cages, among which moved several men apparently occupied with the birds. Filippo muttered in his companion's ear:—

"These are all new servants."

"Well, what of that?"

"They seem acquainted with De Luynes, too. They look to him for orders. I don't like it."

"Why not?" Stephen demanded again.

"Hush! Come this way." Filippo drew him between the cages. "Perhaps we can

overhear something," he whispered, "concerning my father."

The English lad stood still. "You don't fear danger from these men to your father?"

"I fear every one. If we listen, I may discover, in time, what is on foot. Be quiet!"

"I can't stay here," said Stephen. "I can't spy."

"Are you afraid?"

He flushed angrily. "No. But I am ashamed."

Filippo stared at him. "Ashamed? What of? They won't see you."

"Oh, you don't understand! That is the very reason."

The Italian shrugged his shoulders. "No, I don't understand," he answered. "But go, leave me here alone. I am ashamed of nothing that may benefit my father."

Stephen bit his lips, restraining an angry retort. He hesitated, looked towards his companion, yet ended by doing as the other had tauntingly suggested. He stole out of the dark corner, and unobserved, from the room. Filippo soon joined him, his face ghastly pale, his eyes big with horror.

"The worst is true," he gasped. "There is no time to be lost."

"Your father is in peril?"

"Yes."

"Shall we warn him?"

Filippo worked his hands as if he, too, were rolling the ball of wax. "I — you see — that would not be safe. Whoever is with him will only share his fate."

He burst into tears of agony.

"Then what do you mean to do?"

"Run away," sobbed Filippo.

Stephen drew a long breath.

"I 'll give the warning," he announced curtly, and left the hall.

At the moment he emerged into the outer air he saw the marquis strolling towards the Louvre. Stephen ran to meet him until he was stopped by a guard.

He began to expostulate. The soldier thrust him out of the path.

"Vitry!" he cried.

Six men rushed from the door, — those whom Stephen had seen among the birds. A slight sound overhead caused the boy to glance upward. The king stood at a window, his face glowing with eagerness.

A shot sped through the air. With a dreadful scream Concini fell forward on his knees. Another bullet flew past him. Then

the murderers ran closer, drawing their swords.

Sick with horror Stephen covered his eyes. Through the hideous din, the appeal for mercy, and the clank of steel, he could hear Louis exclaim: —

"I thank you, friends. You have made me king indeed!"

No sooner could he escape from the awful scene than Stephen hurried to his royal mistress. Marie was the one to rescue Lenora and her son.

He found the regent weeping bitterly. "I am undone! I am undone!" she whined. "Those wretches have wrought my ruin!"

"Madame," pleaded the boy, kneeling before her, "will you not go to the marquise, and yourself break this terrible news? It would come most tenderly from you."

"I? — I have something else to do," was her heartless reply. "And do you be silent, boy!"

For she saw that he would speak further.

Stephen quietly left the room in search of his mother; possibly she could advise something still to be done. The kind-hearted woman at once consented to visit the wretched Lenora.

"And go you," she directed, "to Queen Anne. Perhaps she will exert herself for the Italians. At least she may remember that they are foreigners — and hated — like herself!"

The good-natured little queen smiled upon the messenger. Many a game of pall mall, since the first, had they played together.

"You deserve something for this persistent championship of the weaker side," said she. "Yes, I will do what I can for Filippo. But, my dear boy, not Louis himself could bring the mother out of this alive."

He felt she spoke the truth. There was a widespread superstition that Lenora was a witch; she must stand trial for sorcery as well as treason, De Luynes at once declaring that the regent was party, with the Concinis, to a conspiracy against the king. In the tumult that ensued Marie and her train were banished to Blois.

Here Stephen learned that Filippo had been sent to Nantes, where, according to the queen's promise, he was under Anne's protection. It was alleged that Lenora had employed a Jewish physician in illness; that she understood astrology; that she played with wax, — always associated with magic, — and

that her influence over the queen-mother had been supernatural. Marie betrayed no interest in the gossip about the examination, nor in Lenora's bravery. The unfortunate marquise only exclaimed, on seeing the crowd collected to witness her death: —

"What a number of persons to watch a poor, afflicted woman!"

Time dragged slowly by in the monotonous life of the disgraced queen's court, until one day Marie beckoned her young attendant to her, on the terrace.

"There was a relative of yours here yesterday," began the regent. "I said my suite were not to be visited. I promised, however, that you should know."

"Was it my father, madame?" Stephen timidly questioned.

"No, no. Neither Benoît nor his wife. Some one from England."

He seemed so perplexed that Marie condescended to ask, "Your family were English?"

"Yes, madame."

"Then have you no friends there still?"

"No, madame, not one. My only living relation is my brother John, with King Frederick."

"This youth declared that he was your brother. He called himself your brother Hugh."

"Hugh? Oh, madame, it cannot be! Pardon me — I — Hugh we had given up for lost. He is like one risen from the dead."

"Tell me about him," said Marie.

By the time the little story was finished she had had enough of the matter.

"It was unlucky," she observed carelessly, "that you could not meet. Still, everything is unlucky that concerns me — poor me! No, no, boy! I don't remember whither he is gone. Let me hear no more about him."

Madame Benoît wrote to Stephen that they had seen Hugh and it was she who sent him to Blois. She told of his adventures in England and America, adding that he was now returned to Virginia. He had already searched for his other brother, and with the same ill-fortune.

"He could talk somewhat freely to your father in English," wrote madame, "and complained that it may be a fine thing for Thomas Chisholm's sons to be at the beck of kings and queens; and yet it does interfere with their plans!"

By and by came another move on the

part of Stephen's mistress which was still further to influence his life. One winter morning Marie sent for him to attend her at once and alone. She was pacing the long room restlessly.

"Boy, may I trust you?" she began. "Can you be discreet and bold?"

"Madame, I hope so."

"I must take no one else into my confidence. Stephen, I am about to be released."

He uttered a cry of pleasure.

"The Duke of Epernon is to give me refuge. Vincenti and Rucellai are arranging the matter now; none others of my suite are to know. And it is left to you to help me."

"You may command me, madame."

He spoke calmly, although he understood why D'Epernon refused to drag into the hazardous undertaking any others of more prominence than the two Florentine servants and an obscure English lad. Nor was there opportunity for parley. Marie's arrangements were already completed.

On the following night she dismissed her ladies in waiting, re-dressed herself, and opened a closet door off her sleeping-room: —

"Are you there, Stephen?" she murmured.

"Yes, madame." He stepped forward.

"And Vincenti is to hold the ladder against the window."

She peered out into the night. "It looks very dark."

"Yes, madame. But you have friends with you. And the ladder is quite safe."

Marie was not well assured of this. "I don't like it," she complained while the boy helped her to take her place on the topmost rungs. "I don't like it at all. Oh, Stephen, how it does shake!"

"Yes, madame, yes. Hold steady there, Vincenti."

By the time they reached the ground the queen-mother was so exhausted that she threw herself upon Stephen's shoulder, breathless and half fainting.

"I could never do it again," said she.

Yet there was a second ladder for the terrace. Vincenti drew Stephen aside to consult. "What is to be done?" he asked. "Her Majesty is unable to repeat that climb."

"I know it."

"Do you think we could let her down in my cloak? Rucellai might catch her in his arms. It would not be an easy piece of work, but, whatever happens, she cannot go by the ladder."

"I'll do my best," Stephen promised.

Marie repeated that she did not like it while she took her seat on the outspread cloak. The others, tugging with all their might, managed to swing it gently over the terrace slope. Down the slant it swayed, down and down, till the waiting Rucellai caught and held it fast.

They walked along the faubourg to the bridge, where they found a carriage, into which the regent was hurried.

"Where is my jewel-case?" she then demanded. "I have dropped it! I must go back at once."

"No, no, madame, not that," Stephen entreated. "Are they so very important?"

"There are one hundred thousand crowns' worth. I tell you I must search for them."

"Wait," he said. "Let me go. I will look. Only — oh, madame, as you value your freedom, don't return."

On his hands and knees he crawled along the way they had come, feeling for the box. At the end of the faubourg, his fingers touched something cold and smooth as a sword blade. It was the golden casket.

He ran back breathlessly, thrust the gems into the coach, and sprang to the seat by Vincenti.

"And now away!" he cried.

At Loches D'Epernon was waiting with one hundred and fifty horsemen. They were safe.

The duke had recognized the gravity of his own act, still he wished to spare others, and advised Marie to convey her accomplices out of France.

Stephen thought he thoroughly understood the character of his royal mistress, yet even he was taken aback by the ungracious message he received soon after their arrival in Angoulême.

"You are to set out on a journey into Italy with M. Benoît. He has been notified to receive you, and you will be forwarded to him to-morrow."

The signature was that of the widow of Henry of Navarre.

CHAPTER XIV

FOR OLD ACQUAINTANCE

STEPHEN received a warm welcome from the only parents whom he could remember. Yet he was not too young to learn the lesson that one never goes back to precisely the same place. There was now a small M. Benoît, a son born during the dreary life at Blois. He must feel, henceforth, that, however dear to this good couple, with a boy of their very own his presence was no longer essential to their happiness.

Under these circumstances it was brought home to him that he had become more a hindrance than a blessing to them. If he were out of the way they could return from Tuscany, unhampered by the odium that must attach, henceforth, at court, to Stephen's name. He thought constantly on the subject and, one night, he spoke.

He was walking home with his father from the garden where they had been permitted to gaze at the Medicean stars through the telescope of one Galileo Galilei.

"Do you believe," asked Stephen, "in his theory of the earth's rotation?"

"It seems irrational," replied M. Benoît, "though his arguments have a specious sound. If it is true, I wonder what effect it will have upon explorations and sea travel." He spoke very slowly, endeavoring to adjust his mind to the novelty.

"Father, that brings us to something," said Stephen, "about which I must consult you. I know that mother is not happy here. Her new home in France is dearer to her than her birthplace. Louis the Just regards me as a firebrand. I not only abetted the queen-mother's flight, but was also Filippo Concini's friend, and tried to warn the marquis of his danger. It is for my sake that you are banished from your country."

"My son, why grieve for the inevitable?" interrupted the Huguenot.

"Because I have a plan to propose," was the firm reply. "It is that I go on to Holland, and leave your movements free."

He stretched out his hand to take that of Gaston Benoît.

"You need not be told that this I do for love of you."

"No, no, Stephen. I know that. Nor

will I allow the separation. Where could you find friends, did we turn you adrift?"

"You would not turn me adrift. You remember Hugh urged that I come out to Virginia. There is a plan on foot, so Master Brewster writes me, that may lead to another colony, one of Independents setting out from Leyden. He wishes both John and me to join it. He argues that it would be better for your future, and not amiss, perhaps, for mine."

M. Benoît was considerably impressed by this opinion, and interested in the emigration scheme. His wife and he conferred together, only to agree that Stephen's prospects were ruined where he was, while theirs truly were impaired by their relationship with him.

"Yet I cannot bid him leave us, Gaston," said the soft-hearted woman. "The boy has been ours for too many years. How could I consent to this separation now?"

M. Benoît rubbed his forehead perplexedly. "If he were once gone" —

"Yes, that is just it. If I knew the step were taken irrevocably, then I should see all the benefits and be reconciled. But to send him away is like shutting the door in the dear child's face."

"Mother," called a voice from within the room, — for they stood upon the balcony that overlooked the town, — "mother, have you forgotten that I am here?"

Stephen appeared at the window.

"You know I could not help hearing all you said," he added apologetically.

Madame Benoît caught him in her arms. "Only to know, sweetheart," she repeated, "that thy mother never shall be brought to send her son away."

No, it was not all, thought Stephen drearily. He had learned, no less, that were he departed, both these good friends would feel the separation to be, upon the whole, for the best. The words his mother uttered haunted his mind. He woke from feverish dreams with broken sentences ringing in his ears,:

"If he were once gone — If I knew the step were taken irrevocably!"

"I must take the step," he concluded.

In one way he realized how serious it was: he saw the long, long miles of a perilous road stretch out between him here in Italy and the refuge open in the Netherlands. What he could not comprehend was the question whether a mere lad had the right to take his future to shape it for himself. Not till later

in his life, when he saw the act repeated by another boy, — to be sure, from different motives, and with a different result — did Stephen Chisholm fully know what it meant to run away from home. At present he was actuated by a belief, common to many older persons, too, that the harder choice must necessarily be the one which was right.

He made his arrangements with great precaution and secrecy. He had a gold piece given him by the Duke of Epernon, and some silver remained of his traveling expenses contributed by the regent. Stephen hoped he could stretch this money to cover the essentials of his flight. He found an oil merchant about to depart for Lucca, and, although that would mean only a few miles of the many, determined to take advantage of his escort in leaving Pisa.

He bade his parents and little Gaston goodnight with unusual tenderness, as madame afterwards remembered.

"That is a good child," she said to her husband, "a good child and affectionate. We could not tell him — could we? — that our home was no longer his?"

In the earliest dawn Stephen crept stealthily down the stairs, carrying his shoes in one

hand. He crossed the threshold noiselessly, drawing the bolts with a careful hand. Once outside in the street, he gave a last, long look at the silent house, at the closed shutters where his mother slept. Then he turned resolutely away.

The oil merchant was a stupid individual, needing aid and not over-scrupulous in regard to whence he obtained the help. He asked few questions while they jogged along the sunny road together; he thanked Stephen for his zeal in performing every labor required of him, nor was he unwilling to recommend the boy, when they reached Lucca, to an acquaintance taking a somewhat similar journey across the Apennines.

In this manner Stephen worked his passage from point to point, only occasionally finding it necessary to draw upon his precious hoard of coins. When he arrived at Pavia he was still in possession of a considerable sum. But here he had no further plans, when he parted at a rough wayside inn from his last employer.

A sharp-faced, keen-eyed man was pacing the common room as Stephen entered, scolding in voluble English the landlord, who stood before him, smoothing down his apron and throwing in, now and then, a word of excuse or comfort.

Stephen caught enough of this last to attract his attention, so that he said: —

"Is the gentleman without a servant? Has his man run away?"

"Absconded with some luggage," was the Italian's answer. "He is leaving here for Switzerland to-night, and is in a furious state. If he understood me better I could make him see that the parcels — he will fret about them — are hopelessly lost. But he won't listen!"

"I don't know whether I could interpret," offered the boy hesitatingly. "Yet I can try. And perhaps he will let me take the runaway's place. I have a recommendation here," drawing the paper from his doublet.

So in his very poor English, with the few words of Italian spoken by the stranger, a bargain was struck between them. Master Ratcliffe, as he called himself, was joined at the inn door by a young girl and an invalid wife, whom they settled comfortably into her traveling wagon. She was a paralytic, completely dependent on her companions, the girl always watchful to anticipate her wants and the husband quite as devoted to her welfare.

"He must be a good man," thought Stephen, "or he would not be so good to her."

There are two lessons we learn from life, and some of us are slow in learning them. One is that the best of us have vices ; another that the worst of us have virtues. It was asking too much of Stephen's years, even with their varied experience, that he should fully appreciate this truth. He observed Master Ratcliffe's ready service to the fretful woman, and in spite of other signs to the contrary decided that he would trust his master, since he was in need of advice.

The girl — she was known as Mary Taylor — came seldom into contact with him, being kept close at the invalid's side. But one night, as the boy emerged from their temporary stopping-place, he found her on the stone bench at the door, enjoying a moment's respite from toil, in the wonderful sunset of the Alps.

"Will you sit here?" she said, nodding towards the space at her side. "You are weary, child. Take your rest."

It was many days since he had heard so kindly a speech. Stephen thanked her with a smile.

"Hugh!" she cried.

Bending forward she clutched him by the wrist. Her face was pale in the twilight.

Her gaze was earnest down into the little fellow's eyes: —

"Is your name — It must be Jack," she said, — and then added, as if to herself, "Yet Jack would be older, too, by now!"

"What know you of my brothers?" asked the startled boy. "I am Stephen Chisholm."

Mary Taylor caught him by both hands and drew him to her. "Yes, he is indeed a Chisholm," she said, reading his features in the twilight. "I never heard of Stephen. But I knew Hugh, and I knew of Jack. Tell me about yourself, dear child."

Their stories were soon exchanged. And it was of this new ally that Stephen inquired in conclusion: —

"Can you help me, Mistress Mary, with your counsel? I am on my way, you see, to Leyden; from the Rhine I must go alone. Pray tell me what to do. Shall I show Master Ratcliffe my purse?"

"You have money?"

"I have this, and this." Stephen pulled the leather bag from his bosom. "I can pay for all I get. Still, I know so little of the road. If my master would show me what to do" —

A glimmer of amusement lighted the girl's

expression. She thought how willingly Ratcliffe would assume the charge of Stephen's finances, with what certain result. "Hearken you," said she earnestly, tapping the words out with her forefinger upon the bench. "Never tell Master Ratcliffe that you own a penny in the world. Never! When you leave us, I shall see to it that you have friends and aid, but I alone. We two will hold the secret of that money-bag. No one else must know."

Her serious manner awed the boy. And, in the close intimacy of that slow journey, when consideration for Mistress Ratcliffe still further retarded their progress, Stephen grew to detest Hugh's old kidnaper, while he saw how helpless he should be in such clutches but for Mary Taylor's warning.

As it was, Ratcliffe wondered at the coolness with which his young charge accepted the small sum due him for his work, and how he could part from them so readily to set out alone upon the last stage of his journey.

"He will starve on the road," he concluded, and then thought no more of the matter.

Meanwhile Mary had arranged every step of that onward course, showing a woman's anxious care, which deprived Stephen of the freedom he might have enjoyed. He privately

chafed a trifle under this sort of bondage, although he would not allow his feeling to appear.

"She acts as if I were little Gaston," he mused, "and could only walk with leading-strings." Tears sprang to his eyes. "Yet it is sweet to think there is somebody who cares to plan for me. One has not enough friends to resent their interference."

Mary kissed him at the last moment. "Because of that other boy — of Hugh," she explained, "whom I knew when I was a little maid."

John Robinson sat, one evening, on the "stoop" of the Leyden parsonage. He was looking idly down the street while he talked with his son Isaac, when his attention was attracted by an approaching figure. A lad, carrying a bundle, and limping, as if footsore, drew near the steps, where he paused.

"I am looking for Master Robinson," said a tired voice.

"Child — you! Who comes seeking me? It is never Stephen Chisholm?"

Letters from Pisa had arrived before this fugitive from the Benoît home.

Stephen sank in a heap on the steps: —

"Then this is the house? It comes in time,

for I could not go another inch. Master Robinson — will you forgive me? I have fled from home, and I ask you to shelter me."

The first answer was to raise the boy tenderly from his hard resting-place. "Come within the house, to food and a bed, my dear," the pastor said. "Afterwards we will talk over what you have done. It is pardoned by those you quitted. I think we must pardon, too. You poor little Pilgrim, we feared you had perished on the way! He has taken the first step, has he not, Isaac, in the progress of the Independents?"

CHAPTER XV

THE PILGRIMS' PROGRESS

STEPHEN was disappointed when he learned that Master Robinson was not to be of the emigrants to America.

"My duty is here," said the clergyman resignedly. "Only part of my flock is to leave Leyden. I doubt, too, whether a patent could be obtained, were it known that John Robinson would benefit thereby. My name is still an offense in the country of King James."

"Why does any one go," asked Stephen, "since some must be left behind?"

"My lad, your very speech is a reason. We talk Dutch together; it is become the common tongue of our exiles, and shows how they are absorbed into the life about them. More than this, the struggle for bread is hard in Leyden; our little ones are bent with toil. Some of the young men, too, have become soldiers, and others sailors, drifting away from their homes. The case

of you orphans was not exceptional, in your wanderings and your separation from one another. Nor can we abide the prevailing notions in regard to the observance of the Sabbath, and on many religious questions. For three years we have debated where our younger brethren were to go; that they were to seek another abiding-place was determined."

"I wish, as Master Bradford says," observed Stephen, "that the destination were to be with Hugh in John Smith's colony, at Jamestown."

"Brother Bradford is of that mind," replied the clergyman, "because he is a silk-weaver, and there are hopes, at Jamestown and Henricus, of cultivating the silk-worm. Master Whitaker urges the godly to come out to the settlement, where, he adds: 'This plantation which the divell hath so often trodden down is revived and daily groweth to more and hopeful success.' But there our people would still be under the rule of the Established Church. That of itself would be sure to breed dissensions. Some of the Dutch have urged us to the Mauritius River. We declined, for the same reasons that drive us from Holland — the Independents would

meet all the home conditions there. We have thought of Guiana " —

" Guiana is where Hugh sailed with Sir Walter Raleigh ! "

" Yes, and whence Hugh returned," observed Master Robinson dryly. " When the story of that disastrous voyage was known we gave up thought of such a country. In the end William Brewster consulted with Sir Edwin Sandys, brother to his old patron at Scrooby, who is governor of the Virginia Company. From him we have obtained our charter, and a loan of £300."

Master Robinson paused abruptly. " I say ' we.' I include myself among the Pilgrims — for they are pilgrims and strangers — and yet it is only my heart that goes with you. I must tarry behind, while Elder Brewster ministers to my children of the faith in far-away Virginia."

It is often said that Scrooby was the cradle of Plymouth. In point of fact only two of the Mayflower's passengers were of that old congregation — William Bradford and William Brewster. Stephen was to become a member of the latter's family, and thus he was in the midst of the commotion which preceded the great flitting.

The Speedwell, a ship of sixty tons burden, was bought and fitted up. Another, the Mayflower, was hired in England, where they were to be joined by other Independents. The eventful time approached, a fast was kept, and Master Robinson preached a sermon, occupying most of the day. His text was : —

"I proclaimed a fast that we might humble ourselves before God, and seek of Him a right way for us, and for our children, and for all our substance."

Fervent prayers followed, broken by tears and sobs. So the pilgrimage began.

Stephen and Love Brewster found no lack of occupation, in the fourteen miles of canal travel to Delftshaven, for a number of the Leyden flock, headed by Master Robinson, journeyed with them to the sea. It was a distraction from sad thoughts to lend a very needful hand in the care of the children, and to comfort those who were forlornest, by hopes of the better times to come.

The night before the embarkation brought no sleep to Stephen, nor to most of the Pilgrims. Morning dawned, with favoring gales and a clear sky. They gathered on board the Speedwell, while John Robinson called his flock about him, and commended them to

the Lord of earth and sea. Great sobs tore from the hearts of the strongest men. The very idlers upon the quay wept with them.

Then the good pastor went from one to another, with a special thought for each. When he came to Stephen he clasped the boy in his arms.

"Fare thee well, my child," he said. "Remember thy Creator in these days of thy youth, and that thou art the son of a righteous father. Bear his name spotless in the New World, as thy brothers have done in their own time and habitation. And so may God be with thee."

Stephen could scarcely command his voice to answer. "By His help, Master Robinson," he stammered, "the Chisholm name shall not suffer dishonor at my hands. All good go with you, sir."

He wrung the fingers he held, before pressing them to his lips in the fashion he had learned in France. With wet eyes he watched that dear form disappear among the crowd of those who sought the land.

On July 22, 1620, the Speedwell spread her sails for Southampton, where they were met by the Mayflower, of one hundred and twenty tons burden. There, too, they were

joined by other Separatists, not all of whom were entirely satisfactory to the directors of the expedition.

Stephen naturally heard a good deal of what was going on from the Brewster family. He was also attracted, boy like, by a soldier in the company, Captain Standish, who had been officer of a British regiment stationed in the Netherlands.

It was he who found Stephen, one afternoon, settling his pretty young wife comfortably in the shade, where she might observe the busy life of the wharf.

"Thou art always kind to my Rose, lad," he said gratefully.

"That he is," assented the girl. "Sit you down, husband, and rest. There is something to fret you, I can see."

Standish took the seat Stephen had cleared for him. "Among these newcomers," he said, "are a few who are but sorry folk, and I wish none of their companionship. Then, too, my heart is troubled by the debts that waited us here. It will take nigh upon £80 to set us free.

Stephen looked up alarmed. "How shall it be done, sir?"

While Rose Standish exclaimed, "But, Miles! we poor Pilgrims can pay no £80."

"It is true, good wife. The only way is to sell from our stores, and that would mean hardship for us all."

"What must go?" asked the girl.

"The butter, for one thing."

She made a wry face. Those who were accustomed to Dutch plentiful good living resented such deprivations; but Stephen, although he had known the luxury of kings' houses, was too manly to feel distressed by loss no worse than this.

"If the women and little children can be served," he suggested, "for the rest we should not suffer on bread and water, Master Standish."

"There is the true Pilgrim spirit," said the soldier, "the voice of one who, having turned his face upon the fleshpots of Egypt, crieth not after them in the wilderness."

Praise from the bluff little captain made Stephen's cheeks tingle with blushes, and he looked bashfully away. His eyes fell upon a lad standing near, who, to his astonishment, he saw was beckoning to him. It was one of the new arrivals on the Speedwell.

Excusing himself he approached the boy.

"You would speak with me?" he said in his uncertain English.

"Thou art Stephen Chisholm?"

"I am he."

"And thy brother is with their Majesties, the king and queen of Bohemia?"

"He is, indeed. Dost know my brother John?"

Stephen's eyes glowed with joy.

"Not I," said the stranger. "But my own brother Frank hath often told us concerning him. They were pages to the Pfalzgrafin together, and now they fight, side by side, for the cause of Frederick."

This was recommendation enough to Stephen, who felt as if he had found a treasure. He questioned his new acquaintance, and answered his inquiries until Miles Standish called him aside upon some excuse. The boy eagerly related his agreeable adventure.

"His father is of the company," he said. "He hath no mother."

"The meeting is like to a sight of thine own, is it not?" agreed the captain. "I know well how glad thou art to hear of John through him. Yet be not too friendly with this young Billington. The father is in small favor with Elder Brewster."

"His brother is Jack's boon companion," urged Stephen.

"He is your brother's comrade. How know you that there is good-fellowship in the bond between them?"

The other smiled frankly. "I do not know. Nay, Master Standish, the lad is not a good lad. I saw that so soon, and thank you for your warning."

Circumstances thereafter threw Stephen into close relations with the Billingtons. John was near his own age, and claimed an alliance on that score no less than by the link between them. Yet he was not a desirable acquaintance in any way, being vain, mischievous, and false, so it was soon learned, and that these were family characteristics.

Upon the 5th of August they set out to sea from Southampton, having discharged their obligations in the manner suggested by Miles Standish. There were one hundred and twenty passengers upon the two vessels. After a hundred miles had been passed, Stephen one day heard the Speedwell captain announce that it had sprung a leak and must be overhauled. He ran to Standish in dismay with his news, nor was the boy the only one to fret at the delay. They put into Dartmouth, where they were detained for a week, setting out again on the 21st of the month.

Once more land was left behind. Their spirits began to rise.

"What is that?" cried Wrestling Brewster. "Stephen, dost thou see? Something hath gone wrong with the ship."

"In truth," was the quick reply, "she is settling into the water!"

They ran forward to where Captain Reynolds stood surrounded by a clamorous group of men. The Speedwell was certainly slackening speed. There was something very wrong. Elder Brewster emerged from the crowd as they approached it. His forehead was dark with a heavy frown.

"What is it, father?" asked Wrestling.

"Another leak. And we return yet again to England."

A shriek of horror went up from those who heard him.

"It is plain that the Speedwell is too weak for the voyage. She must be forsaken," Master Brewster went on disconsolately.

"And we?"

"We shall betake ourselves to the Mayflower. Some among us say they will not set out again. I fear there will be room for all who wish to go."

Stephen saw one advantage, and one alone,

in this intelligence. Perhaps the Billingtons would abandon the undertaking.

They accordingly sought refuge in Plymouth. It was suspected that Master Reynolds had raised an undue alarm from fear of the whole enterprise. He and his men were dismissed, twenty of the emigrants likewise refusing to make the third trial. They said these failures had been a warning; that it was tempting Providence to persist longer.

But the first person Stephen saw, when he climbed to the Mayflower's deck, was Johnny Billington.

"So you are still with us," he observed rather faintly.

John noticed nothing amiss. He was too full of swaggering importance. "My father hath cast his all in the venture," he answered pompously. "We must sink or swim with the rest. 'T would not do for him, at this late day, to turn his back upon you."

CHAPTER XVI

THE VOYAGE OF THE MAYFLOWER

"THE shipmen are merry," said Johnny Billington, "and the forecastle is right pleasant. Would you visit it with me?"

Stephen declined this offer with considerable spirit.

"I have no delight in their conversation," he answered. "Their cursing and rude jesting I abominate. I counsel you, John, to flee these wicked men."

"It is as Fletcher said," was the other's comment. "You are like the rest — a mean hypocrite, and care not for a good brave man."

"Fletcher is worst of them all in his vile speech. I see not why you hearken to the fellow's abuse."

"He is right kindly with me and hath much excellent fooling for my diversion. He mocks the wretches overcome by the sea-sickness, and tells them that they shall die and their bodies be thrown to the fishes."

"I cannot laugh at such cruel words," cried Stephen, with curling lip. "Nor will I stand by in silence when I hear him fret the afflicted."

"Thou senseless clown! A boy like thee to reprove a man like him!"

At that moment they saw the sailor in question approach a little girl, very wan and languid, who was coiled into an uncomfortable position upon the deck. Stephen mistrusted mischief and took a hurried step towards them, just in time to hear Fletcher say: —

"Nay, thou shalt not drown. It will be after thou art dead."

The child shuddered. "Shall I be buried in the sea?"

"That shalt thou, on the morrow, about this time" —

The forlorn little thing burst into tears.

"For shame," cried Stephen. "Have done, Fletcher! What hath he said to thee, Bess?"

"That I am dying," sobbed the girl, "and on the morrow the fishes shall pick my bones."

Stephen turned white with rage. "It is a wicked lie. So surely, John Fletcher, as you say another like word to this poor maid, I go

with the truth to Master Jones. We will see how your barbarous jesting is received."

Fletcher glared at him in impotent rage. Furious as he felt at the interference, he knew this threat placed him in the lad's power. After a moment of morose silence he wheeled about and strode away, with Johnny at his heels. Stephen stayed behind to comfort Bessy.

The Mayflower had been retarded by cross winds that beat upon the frail vessel, threatening its destruction. On the following morning Stephen and Wrestling Brewster ascended to the outer air. The first person they met was Johnny Billington staggering along the uneven deck.

"What hath gone wrong?" asked Stephen, impressed by his strange look. "Art thou ill, lad?"

"Not I. Have you heard of Fletcher?"

"Nay. What is amiss with him?"

Johnny shivered nervously. "A sore disease hath suddenly smitten him. The master saith there is no hope. He must die."

They gazed, aghast, at one another.

"'T is the hand of the Lord," declared Wrestling Brewster.

That night the body of John Fletcher was

rolled in a tarred sheet, and slid from a plank into the restless sea. Little Bess slept at peace in her bed, but her tormentor met the fate with which he had frightened her.

Not long after, a death occurred among the Pilgrims. William Butler, a servant to Master Fuller, succumbed to a brief illness. The impressive burial in the ocean took place on a wet and dismal November day. One hundred and one souls left Plymouth; and although Butler died, Master Hopkins had a son born to him, — Oceanus he was called, — so that the number, as Rose pointed out to Stephen, remained the same.

The untoward weather continued to the last. In one of the high gales Stephen and John Howland, a member of Master Carver's family, concluded to go up on deck. They were stiff from lack of exercise, and faint for a breath of air, yet they knew that they were rash in thus venturing out of the cabin. No sooner, however, had they stepped from shelter than they were rewarded for the effort. Howland put his mouth close to the boy's ear and screamed: —

"Seest aught on the larboard — there where I point? Is it not a dim line like land?"

Stephen gazed earnestly and long to the

westward before he called, in return, across the mad tumult of wave and wind: —

"I can scarcely believe it; it is too good to be true! And yet I do make out a long blue line — Oh, John, thou shalt not venture further!"

"I will be sure," was the reckless answer.

He lurched forward, clinging to mast and spar. He stood at the side, for a perilous instant, peering out into the distance. A moment later, as Stephen watched him trembling, a tremendous billow broke over the ship. When it receded it bore his body back with it to the ocean.

"Help, Stephen, help," came a wailing cry.

Instantly Stephen slid down the precipitous hill of the slippery deck tipping dizzily to the water's edge. He was conscious of the value of every movement, and did not lose his presence of mind.

John was sinking into the bottomless gulf between two giant waves. His white, despairing face glared up from the depths of the green water.

"Lay hold of the topsail halyards," Stephen hallooed, making a trumpet of his hands.

The ghastly face sank out of sight. The

body was swept away. To the waiting boy it seemed as if hours passed before John's head again appeared in sight. The topsail halyards hung overboard, and the drowning youth clutched out at them. Meanwhile Stephen's incessant appeals for assistance had brought a sailor to the rescue. Together, with the aid of a boathook and a rope, they secured the limp, dangling form and drew it into the ship.

All was over in a breathless moment. Yet both felt as if they had lived years since they quitted the others in the cabin, and since their sight fell, in that happy glance, upon the long wished for land.

And it was land. On this 9th of November, the first glimpse of Cape Cod had been vouchsafed. Their destination, however, was farther south, to what we call New Jersey, at a point not far from Fort Manhattan. Accordingly the Mayflower tacked and proceeded to the southward. A fair wind gave them hope and courage; they were all cheerful, their trials past, the reward of patience close at hand. Thus they chatted together while, throughout the bright fall morning, they kept upon their course. Even while they spoke the wind died down, a calm fell,

and they were left in the midst of perilous shoals.

Captain Jones improved the opportunity to call a conference of the leading men among his passengers. Those standing about outside while it was in progress cast apprehensive glances upon one another. This action might portend either more delay or a change of plan. It scarcely could foretell their welfare.

Miles Standish was outspoken, when he emerged from the cabin. He declared that the master was bribed by certain among the Dutch who had all along opposed the neighborhood of any English settlement. His fear of the cape shoals was all pretense, blustered the captain, no less than his assertion that he could not make his way farther — a seafarer of his experience, forsooth!

However they were powerless in the man's hands, who told them one obvious truth, — that his crew were unwilling to prolong the voyage. He feared the mutiny, brooding throughout those past two months, would break out, should he insist.

To the Pilgrims' surprise, their wives rejoiced over Captain Jones's decision to land without delay. The women, on their part,

said that they were worn out by the tedious journeying in cruelly cramped quarters. It made little difference whether here or elsewhere they made their future home; to leave the sea and the Mayflower was the first consideration.

A light breeze rose upon the instant of the new resolve. They were gently wafted away from the dangerous shoals and carried out again upon the ocean. They wakened, in the morning, to the singular sensation of a vessel floating at anchor. All rushed up on deck. At the extremity of the cape, in a safe harbor, the Mayflower lay at rest.

It was not a promising outlook. Sand cliffs rose white in the gray light before them. There was no sign of the fertility of which they had heard from the Jamestown settlers. The day was bleak, for they had come at the beginning of winter. They must contend here against cold and barrenness, added to the hardships of an unbroken country.

Before landing was made the forty men assembled in the cabin, and proceeded to draw up and sign a short contract of government, a document which was the germ of the American Constitution. Master Carver was unanimously elected governor for the coming year.

Miles Standish stood telling his wife of their proceedings when Stephen came forward to learn from him of what had happened.

"Here are further news," said the officer. "I am to lead a party ashore to discover the land, and bring back wood and water."

"Oh, my master, take me with you!"

Pretty Rose joined in her husband's laugh. "I thought that would be thine outcry. Well, well, lad, so be it! Arm thyself, for we know not what greeting may be ours, and meet me at the shipside without delay."

Within a half hour the men, no less impatient for action than the boy, pulled away from the vessel, followed by wistful glances in their progress to the shore.

Here they found a narrow neck of land covered by sand dunes that reminded them of Holland. When they walked on they crossed good ground and finally came to woods of oak and pine. They discovered no spring, nor any sign of inhabitant, but an abundance of fish and sea fowl which promised food for their stores, and they cut red cedar — calling it juniper — to serve as firewood. With this trophy, in the early dusk of autumn, they retraced their steps to the Mayflower.

That evening in the cabin, by the fragrant

fire which was America's first gift to them, they laid their plans for the future, and on Sunday Elder Brewster preached a memorable sermon of thanksgiving, while the sand hills echoed to the Pilgrims' hymns.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIRST ENCOUNTER

In Stephen Chisholm's short life he had never known a happier awakening than on the Monday morning when he opened his eyes to the expectation of novel adventures in an untried country.

For such it practically remained, although there had been two or three futile attempts at the settlement of the New England coast. These were each quickly abandoned, while the shores remained best known by the cursory visits of sailors. A few years before the coming of the Mayflower Captain John Smith explored the region, and made a map from his discoveries, giving names, which still exist, to important features of the land. The Prince of Wales, afterwards Charles the First, aided him in this part of his task.

The Pilgrim Mothers demanded at once that they be set upon land, and allowed to wash the accumulated clothes of their families, so each of the twenty-eight women and girls

was conveyed to the sands, where some boys were already gathering sticks for the fire, and filling kettles with water.

Johnny called to Stephen to come thither and form one of the women's guard.

"Pooh! we are not in danger," said Rose, "and we require no watch. Lad, thou wouldst go with the men who search for a building spot; is it not so?"

"If they will take me."

"They shall take thee."

Running after her husband, she spoke to him. "Thou art to go," she cried.

Stephen thanked her hurriedly, and hastened to overtake the others, marching gayly along under Standish's guidance, with fourteen well-armed men who carried food for a two days' trip. They had walked without adventure for about a mile when —

"See there!" called Stephen, pointing ahead of him.

They were proceeding in single file. The man ahead and the man behind him stopped abruptly. Six forms, indistinctly seen, approached them.

"'T is Master Jones and some of the shipmen," suggested John Billington. "They have come to land, and would meet us."

"They are savages," Stephen declared.

"The boy is right," William Bradford said. "They are savages."

At that moment the Indians noticed them as well. Wheeling about, they dashed with one accord into the woods.

"Shall we follow?" asked Stephen Hopkins.

Their leader inclined his head. Each man seized his musket more tightly. Stephen drew his knife from its scabbard, and they set out into the forest. The natives had taken the route that Captain Standish wished to follow, so they kept on their way, although they saw nothing of the fugitives. They traversed the head of a long creek, and so into another wood through underbrush which tore even the stout coats they called armor. In due time they reached a small lake with signs of bird and animal life.

"This will be our food in the time to come," observed the careful captain.

"And here," said Stephen eagerly, "the savages have planted the land."

He waved his hand towards a tract of some fifty acres, cleared and harvested long ago. There was, however, no house visible. They then struck inland along a path which soon

developed into a defined roadway. It led them to a number of mounds covered by decaying mats, with an earthen pot lying upon one. Billington began to dig.

"Here is a bow, and, I think, arrows," he said, holding up his trophies. "But they are rotten."

"Put them in their place again," shouted the captain, "and set the tomb in order. It is odious for us to pilfer from their sepulchres."

They now found a cornfield whose crop had been gathered, and finally they came to a ruined wigwam. Within it lay a kettle of European manufacture.

"Here is another grave," said Stephen Hopkins, "but newly made. Shall we dig it up?"

Standish's reply was to step forward and stir the sand with his sword. He was rewarded by the sight of a basket containing three or four bushels of corn.

The captain sharply ordered a circle of guards to surround him while he examined these treasures. "We will take the kettle with us," he said at length, "and so much of the corn as we can carry. When we come to truck with the savages we shall recompense them for it." This was afterwards done.

By this time rain was falling heavily. They made a fire in the shelter of the trees, and encamped here, each in turn standing watch.

On the following morning they lost their way in the wet, dark woods, and William Bradford was caught in a deer trap set by the Indians. They saw some game, but not within gunshot, and so they came back to the water, and the longboat put out from the Mayflower to meet them.

The harbor was poor, for at low tide they could not reach shore except by wading. In that bitter weather the seed of much sickness was sown from this exposure. Parties went out almost daily, seeking the best position for a settlement, although many of the Pilgrims wished to plant their colony at this point on Cape Cod. Others preferred to go about twenty-four miles away, where, they were assured by a Mayflower sailor, there was an excellent harbor and better fishing. It was decided to send explorers thither.

On a bitter December day the shallop set out to examine the recommended site. Two men became so seasick, before land was reached, that they could not sit upright, while the surf dashed over them all, freezing their clothes like iron. As they approached the

coast they spied a number of Indians, in the distance, cutting up a grampus, and from where they stopped for the night, they could watch the smoke of their fires. In the morning they sought the spot, found the track of bare feet in the sand, and saw the fish sliced into strips, but the men had disappeared. The Pilgrims separated here, some of them going on by land. At sunset they joined those in the boat.

"On the outskirts of the wood," said Standish, "we shall spend the night. And now to get firewood for our need."

A watch was set, as usual, Stephen and John Howland mounting guard after midnight. As they sprang to their feet and grasped their guns, a black and silent world lay all about them. Then, out from the wilderness, there came an awful cry.

"Arm! Arm!" called Howland. Stephen fired his musket.

Every one scrambled up, awake in an instant, but the noise had ceased as abruptly as it began. Their own stir and confusion were all now that broke the hush of the winter woods.

"It was a wolf in the distance," explained one of the sailors. "I often heard such

sounds when I was in New-found-land. These lads were alarmed and gave the cry too soon."

"I was not alarmed," Stephen protested. "Nor was it a wolf I heard."

Howland echoed this assertion.

"Peace," said Standish. "Let us have no dispute. The noise of wild beasts might well serve to arouse us."

The boys were silent, although far from persuaded, and the men lay down again. About daybreak Stephen heard two or three of them wondering whether their pieces would fire. They shot, to prove the matter.

"A waste of powder and bullets which may be needed," he thought grimly.

After prayers, in the dim morning light, there began a procession between the shallop and the camp. Again Stephen and John Howland muttered to one another criticism concerning the foolhardiness of those who threw their weapons into a pile upon the beach, before coming back to the others and seating themselves for their breakfast.

No sooner had the first mouthful been taken than Howland laid down his biscuit, and reached towards his gun.

"That sound again!"

Standish was beginning to blame himself for bringing these lads upon such an undertaking. He opened his lips for a stern reproof. It was never given.

An indescribable uproar arose in the woods close by. John Tilley, returning from the shallop, rushed forward to the fire.

"It is the savages!" he gasped. "The savages!"

An arrow fell at his feet. Another whistled past Standish's ear. The third whizzed between two men and planted itself upright in the sand.

There was a brave dash, from half the party, for the shore. The other men seized their guns, while William Bradford and the captain shot at random, thinking to frighten their assailants and protect those clambering into the boat. John Alden, Stephen, Master Hopkins, and one of the mates stood together, the only ones now ready with loaded guns to guard the rest who knelt behind them, working in furious haste. Miles Standish raised his voice to a shout: —

"How is it with the shallop?"

"Well. Be of good courage," was the answer.

Three shots rattled across the water. Brad-

ford's anxious tones came from within the circle.

"But now what shall we do? They must have a firebrand to light their matches, ere the muskets can be charged."

"But how to get it to them?" asked John Howland disconsolately.

Stephen's decision was reached before that question ended. He whispered over his shoulder: "Master Bradford, if you will slip beside me, and take my piece, I know a way."

"What is it?" inquired Bradford briefly. He took the one step, stretching out his hand for the gun.

Stephen passed it to him, and glided back. He picked a smouldering stick from among the logs.

"This!" he cried, and flew down the path, like the wind.

A yell rose from the hidden foe. A shower of arrows pattered about him. He heeded neither the one nor the other, for the sound was lost in the English cheer that followed him.

Without harm he waded out through the shallow water, reached the boat with his prize, and took his place among the men. In

the growing light they could see there were nearly fifty of the Indians. One, apparently a leader, was hiding behind a tree only a few rods away from Standish. He shot rapidly missiles that were invariably seen and dodged.

Standish fired finally at the chief, as others had done before him. He had a better aim, and so he hit the mark. The Indian's right arm dropped, broken. A discordant scream followed, then a soft rustle as of raindrops in the fallen leaves. Those in the boat could see that the savages were fleeing.

They called to the captain, who ordered a pursuit. "Keep ye to the shallop," he added, in a resounding shout, before he and his men were away, at a swinging pace, into the woods.

They went a quarter mile, and saw nothing. They hallooed lustily, and shot their guns.

"They must be made to understand," said Miles Standish, "that we have no fear of them."

He found the rest, upon his return, busily gathering up the arrows. Some were tipped with brass or horn, others with eagles' claws. The captain picked one of these from the ground, and approached Stephen.

"Like to like," said he. "This is for the boy who risked his life to save those in the boat. Thou art an eaglet, my Stephen, and I am right proud of thee."

CHAPTER XVIII

"WELCOME, ENGLISHMEN"

In the windy, sleety rain the entire party embarked in their little shallop. The driving gale beat clouds of spray into the boat; clothes, oars, and ropes were soon covered with ice. It was impossible, they found, to land in the raging surf. Hour after hour they skirted the shore, peering out in search of an inlet to afford them shelter.

Night was falling. As the last glimmer of the December daylight faded into darkness, a gigantic wave broke over the boat.

"The rudder hath parted!" called Howland.

At that moment their mast snapped into bits, and the sail flew away upon the storm. Coppin, the pilot, was one of the fishermen who sometimes visited the coast. To their horror, he now threw up his arms with the cry: —

"The Lord have mercy upon us! I was never in this place."

A groan of despair burst from his companions. " Then we are lost," said one.

" What can be done ? " demanded Captain Standish.

Coppin was utterly beside himself.

" Run the boat ashore through the breakers," he said insanely.

William Bradford alone kept his head. His clear voice came out of the darkness : " If ye be men, seize your oars, or we are gone ! "

He bent to his own. Stephen and John pulled manfully at his side. They were soon rewarded by land, an island, looming up before them.

Here they built a fire, raised a rampart, and rested throughout the following day, Sunday. On Monday they explored the mainland, and found a long, jagged rock on which they sprang, — John Alden first, — leading up to a region with several streams of good water and arable soil. They decided to look no farther, but to select this for their home.

During their joyful return to the ship various names were suggested for the settlement. Master Hopkins proposed that they take a vote.

" Plymouth it is," announced Stephen, who

was appointed teller. "We shall honor the last town which gave us shelter in the Old World."

Suddenly William Bradford stood still. "Know you," said he, "the names that Master John Smith hath given, in his map of the coast?"

"Verily," Captain Standish responded, "of towns where are no towns. I remember them."

"There is a Plymouth," Bradford went on, "and hereabouts. I think now 't is where we have chosen the very same name for the land."

Stephen afterwards looked up the map, in the Mayflower's cabin, and found that William Bradford was right. The spot had been twice called Plymouth. Here was another strange coincidence. When he spoke of it to Rose she burst into tears.

"And we," said she, "are still one hundred and one. Peregrine White's birth was followed by another death."

It was mournfully true. The first glimpse of the watching faces, as the party approached the ship, had betrayed bad news awaiting them.

"What is it?" called Standish, leaping

upon the deck. He asked the question of his wife, who did not seem to hear him, for her eyes were fastened upon William Bradford. Passing the captain, she glided to the young man's side. He was gazing about him in a bewildered fashion. "Where is Dorothy?" he demanded.

Rose placed her hand upon his arm. "Friend William, strive to be the brave man I know thee. Thou wert seeking a home for thy wife" —

"Where is Dorothy?" he repeated.

"She hath found a better land, even a heavenly," said Rose Standish's pitying voice.

During those journeys back and forth from ship to shore, Mistress Bradford made a misstep in trying to land. The cold water engulfed her; she had not strength to resist it for the moment before rescue came. So she was drowned, close to the Mayflower, and in sight of her friends.

Those were hard days for the Pilgrims when the anticipation of their new enterprise was thus darkened by grief. The Mayflower crossed the bay and anchored, in order that the men might go to and fro between her and the land. There was work ready and waiting for every one. Trees were felled, timbers

sawed, foundations dug in the frozen ground. The one hundred and one persons were divided into nineteen families, the men of whom cast lots for land, which each staked out, and, in the course of time, set about building his log house, a hospital being one of the earliest structures under pressure of immediate need. Even these sturdy Englishmen could not endure the sufferings from cold, wet, and wretched fare. Their original number did not long continue; almost every day brought a death. There was little time or strength or heart for further explorations, although John Billington, never averse from shirking his share of the toil, roamed about the country and discovered the pond since known as Billington Sea.

Early in the new year Stephen attended Howland, John Goodman, and Peter Brown into the woods to find flags for thatching. After some not very successful search the older men proposed a further journey. "You two may bind up that which is cut," said they, "and follow us."

The lads accordingly worked for an hour or more, leaving bundles of rushes along the water-edge, and pushing on towards the forest. Finally John inquired: —

"Thinkst thou not that we should have sight of the men? We find no more flags, nor is there trace of them."

Stephen looked perplexed. "That is true," he said reflectively. "There are neither cuttings nor footsteps here to tell the way they went. Shall one of us return to the Plantation for counsel? I know not how to act."

Howland began buttoning his coat. "I will go," he said with decision. "And thou — shalt thou tarry here, or seek for them?"

"Seek for them."

So John disappeared in the forest, and Stephen went on alone.

Almost immediately the sound of voices was brought to him. He thought he was nearing his fellow Pilgrims, and was about to call aloud. Then he took a sober second thought and hastened forward in silence. He ran down a hill, emerged from the wood, and came out on the borders of a gloomy swamp; came out upon what, surely, no white man had ever witnessed before. He had intruded on a native council.

He threw himself flat upon his face. Happily the underbrush skirting the forest served for a screen. He looked towards a

glowing fire and, before it, a semicircle of red men, painted, tattooed, decked out with bears' claws or the beaks of birds. They half surrounded a tiny wigwam into which was crawling the hideous figure of a man, daubed with paint and bristling with feathers. Presently a drum's harsh sound was heard from within the hut, accompanying a doleful chant. After some moments the conjurer crept out again and brought forward a white dog, which he tied to a long pole and raised in the air. Its howls mingled with the noise of the men, who rushed forward, yelling and throwing bits of tobacco into the fire, or into the black pools about them. All capered like madmen, and were so absorbed in their mystic rites that Stephen could steal away unseen.

He rose to his feet when the hill behind him had been reached, and ran — ran like a hunted animal.

Now there was a rustle among the leaves; a dry twig snapped. He dashed behind a great walnut-tree, holding his breath, and clinging to the trunk. The pit-pat of a gentle step came close. Stephen could hear heavy breathing as the steps drew nearer. They were making straight for him.

There followed a precipitous rush. Some-

thing leaped upon him, knocking him over on the moss. But this was a friend, a friend who licked Stephen's hands and face, uttering barks and growls of joy.

"Oh, Jowler, good Jowler," cried the boy. "Hast left the men and come in search of us? Lead me to them, faithful Jowler, if thou lovest me."

The intelligent spaniel sprang upon him, gazed up in his face, and ran on in advance, then paused to see if he would follow. Thus guided Stephen hurried on in renewed hope.

"Surely that was a voice," he said aloud. "Some one spoke, spoke in English words. Halloo, halloo, halloo!"

"Halloo," returned the answer.

He tore through bushes and briers, the dog panting at his heels. A face peered out of a clump of elders. It was John Goodman's.

"Ha, it is Chisholm," he cried gleefully. "Help is here!"

"Alas, no," Stephen confessed. "I am alone."

Goodman sank upon the snow, in a gesture of despair. "Then are we lost indeed. We looked for rescue from the Plantation."

"It will soon come. Howland is gone back to give the word."

Here Peter Brown appeared from behind the other man. "We are sore spent," he explained, "and wet and but poorly apparéled. I know not what we shall do, without victuals or fire, throughout the night."

"Nor have we weapons," added Goodman, regarding his scythe, "save for our sickles."

"Can we not forego meat for a brief season?" Stephen asked cheerily. "And we may wait for the others beneath the shade of yonder trees."

"But now how shall we endure the bitter night?" said Brown.

"We must walk back and forth that we be not frostbitten," Stephen replied. "There is no other way. We cannot tell when help may find us."

Up and down they paced, dragging their weary feet through the snow, not daring to rest for one moment of the tedious hours till the winter dawn.

At the first glimmer of light they set out again. They tramped on and on, watching the sun creep across the sky. They marked its course, with the unspoken thought that they could not survive another night in the woods. And yet darkness was fast approaching.

"I will climb this hill," suggested Stephen. "It may be from thence I shall spy out the land."

John Goodman sank upon his knees. "I cannot take another step. I am dying."

Brown and Stephen exchanged horrified glances. They believed he spoke the truth.

"Stay you with Goodman," said the boy, "and I will seek the hilltop. Home may be nearer than we deem it."

"The long Home," moaned the exhausted man. No one answered.

Stephen stumbled forward and began the steep ascent, drawing each breath with painful effort. Yet when the summit was reached, the prospect spread out before him took away all sensation except delight.

"We are saved," he called. "Plymouth is in sight!"

At dusk they staggered in to the settlement. The search party had returned, and stood discussing what next to do, when they spied the wanderers, whom they speedily surrounded and succored. Goodman's shoes were cut away from his swollen feet, and he and the others were led at once to food and bed in the Commonhouse.

A defense was organized, about this time.

One morning Captain Standish called all who could bear arms to assemble in the street, and as they fell into line Johnny Billington, his eyes always roving about, gave Stephen a violent thrust in the side.

"Look thou!" he said.

A tall, well-formed savage had left the woods and approached the plantation. He walked along with the utmost coolness, marching through the gate straight towards the Commonhouse. Stephen sprang before its door and raised his musket threateningly. Standish motioned to him to lower the gun.

For their visitor was no enemy. He held out his hand in greeting. The first words the Pilgrims heard from native lips were these: —

"Welcome, Englishmen!"

CHAPTER XIX

THE LOST BOY

THE Pilgrims' guest was Samoset of the Kennebec Indians on Monhegan Island, a resort of European fishermen. He told them that their first encounter with the Indians was greeting from the Nausites, who had been treacherously treated by white men. Some time before this, one Captain Hunt had lured twenty-seven of the natives on board his ship, and then carried them away, to be sold in Spain for slaves. Soon after, a French ship was wrecked off Cape Cod. The savages fell upon the crew, and killed or captured them. One of the sailors told his persecutors that God would destroy them, and give their country to another people, in punishment for the massacre. Their proud answer was: "We are so many that we could not be cut off." Almost directly the plague, a disease resembling yellow fever, broke out among them, by which whole nations were swept away.

"There are some things concerning this

Samoset," said Captain Standish to Stephen, "that serve to fret me. He tells much, yet much he will not tell. Nothing can drag from him how many savages are in the wood about us. I fear he is a spy sent to search out the nakedness of the land."

"What shall be done with him?"

"For the night Master Hopkins is pledged to keep him. He saith that he must return, on the morrow, to the tribe of the Massasoits."

Stephen made up his mind to visit Master Hopkins's home that evening. He entered the log house upon the welcome of the little girl who swung open the door at his knock. A huge fire burned on the hearth. The host sat between the oaken table and the chimney in the flag-bottomed chair that had been brought across the ocean. His wife occupied another such seat, while for the children and servants were a wooden settle and small stools. The Indian squatted on the floor close to the cheery blaze.

They made room for Stephen in their semicircle, and the conversation went on.

"Samoset saith," explained Master Hopkins, "that, because of their wrongs, the Nausites crave vengeance from the white men. I doubt they shall give us trouble."

"So I have feared," said Stephen, "ever since the day when I was lost in the wood. May I ask somewhat of him?"

He leaned forward in his seat, and fixed his eyes on the Indian until he had secured the man's attention. Then Stephen sprang forward to the clear space by the fire, and began a curious pantomime. He acted that scene in the dark swamp where he had been a looker-on.

Samoset started from his calm demeanor. His gaze was transfixed; he bent almost double, watching the varied movements in breathless interest. When Stephen sank, exhausted, on his bench again, his face white with excitement, the children were huddled together, whimpering, and their parents were eying the native.

"What did it mean?" demanded the boy.

Samoset looked sulky and dejected. He was ready now to believe all he had heard whispered about among the stricken people as to the power of the white men. How, except through magic, had they learned the Indians' secrets?

In his poor English he told them briefly concerning the event thus pictured. It had been a powwow when the intruders were

cursed by a conjurer, who ordered the Evil Spirit to destroy them.

Those were superstitious days. A shiver crept along Stephen's spine, and even Master Hopkins looked grave. Plymouth was founded upon the ill will and the ill wishes of its neighbors.

Samoset soon returned to the Massasoits. He seemed pleased with his reception, and promised to speedily bring them an Indian to act as an interpreter. They did what they could to placate these natives, but all the plantation was apprehensive of bloodshed. Stephen, for his part, would have thought more of the matter had he not his secret cause for harassment which swallowed up everything else.

One bright winter day Rose Standish and he walked up and down the street in the lengthening sunshine. "If the spring were here," observed the boy, "and the Plantation at ease with the savages, think you not, Mistress Standish, that I might set out for Jamestown? 'T was Hugh, you know, whom I came hither to seek."

"How wouldst thou find him? Thou canst not traverse these wild forests alone."

"There will soon be ships coming and

going between us and South Virginia. I could make the journey in all safety, nor would it be forsaking my companions, did I leave Plymouth for a season. Say you so, mistress?"

It was only a girl whom he addressed, a homesick, bodysick girl, too young to appreciate what she asked. "My hope had been," she said sadly, "that thou wouldst tarry with mine husband. He will have need of thee."

"How should that be?" Stephen inquired. "Master Standish is lusty and strong."

"But I am not."

She held up one thin hand in the clear winter light. He could almost see through the wasted fingers. "I shall be with Dorothy Bradford ere the springtime," said Rose.

"Oh, mine own friend, not you! I cannot give you up!"

The boy clung to her in utter desolation, while she brushed the tears from his cheeks with a motherly tenderness. "I have put off telling thee so long as I could," she said, "but promise me, dear heart, that thou wilt not leave Miles in his grief! He will be so wretched, my poor husband. Thou art like his very child, and so thou wilt comfort and help him. Oh, Stephen, pledge thy word that thou wilt not leave Miles alone!"

He realized what that pledge implied. It was the surrender of the hope which had brought him to America, the hope whereon his entire future was based. Yet he could not refuse the dying wife.

"My word is passed, dear mistress," said he.

It was their last talk together. Rose grew rapidly worse after that, and never came out of doors again. She died one winter morning, and her grave was made on the hillside, where they smoothed it to the level of the ground. The Indians must not guess how that burial-plot was filled. In the summer they planted grain here, and kept their sad mystery close.

Samoset was not long in returning with Squanto, the interpreter. He proved to be the sole surviving native of that immediate region, his life having been saved from the plague when Captain Hunt carried him to Spain, whence Squanto had worked his way to England. It was by his assistance and that of Samoset that a visit was arranged from the great chief Massasoit, who appeared with considerable pomp, which did not conceal an attitude of natural distrust. However, he was eager for a contract that was drawn up

and agreed upon between his tribe and the newcomers, binding both sides to peace and justice. For forty years it remained unbroken.

One hot spring day the governor came in from his plough complaining of a pain in his head that was probably of the nature of sunstroke. After several days of delirium his death, too, was announced. The Mayflower had repeatedly postponed her homeward voyage on account of continuous and general illness among the crew. Early in April she sailed for England, and it was cheering to observe that, dark as was the outlook, no one embraced this opportunity to return.

William Bradford was chosen governor in Master Carver's stead. Not long after his election he went up to Stephen, at work on one of the new buildings.

"Hast thou heard," he asked, "that John Billington was found?"

"Young John? I knew not that he was lost."

"Nor I till twelve hours since. They have their own ways, those Billingtons! However that be, 't was yester-evening the father informed me Johnny had not been seen since Thursday at noon."

"And this is Monday!"

"It is all very strange. They were hunting in the woods, it seems, and so the lad strayed away. The father returned to the Plantation on Saturday, but thought we would do nothing on the Sabbath. And now these news have come of him."

"What are the news, Master Bradford?"

"A savage hath told Squanto the child wandered about in the wood, eating berries for food, until he was found by the Nausites."

"Those who attacked us?"

"The same. They have treated him kindly, and hold him now. I shall send the shallop at once, with ten of you, in search of him. Begone, Stephen, to make ready, for I wish thee to go." And the boy was very willing to comply with the governor's order.

They set out upon a glassy sea, but had not been long afloat when a tremendous thunderstorm came up. In the after-calm they anchored for the night, fearing a possible attack should they go on shore. At daybreak several Indians gathering lobsters came out in canoes, who brought an invitation from their sachem for a visit from John Alden, in command of the expedition.

"I shall land," said he to the father of the

lost boy, "and you and Stephen, Howland and Brown may attend me. But we will leave four savages in the shallop for pledges. I dare not stir without that surety."

The young chief received them hospitably, engaging Alden in talk, by means of the interpreter, while Stephen and the others looked about them. The whole village had come out to stare at the strangers.

"See that hideous witch," said John Billington loudly. "She is as ugly as a scarecrow, and must be nigh to a hundred years. Why, what means her outcry?"

For as he pointed at the bent and withered form, the old squaw set up a howl.

"What is wrong?" Stephen asked Squanto. "She cannot have understood Master Billington's words."

"It is the mother," he answered, "of three sons who were carried away by Captain Hunt. Your white faces have maddened her."

"Oh, poor soul! Tell her," urged the boy, "that, not for all the wealth of the country, would we harm a hair of her head."

He ran to Alden, obtained a handful of trinkets, and poured them into the woman's shrunken hands. When at last he had brought her to smile, John Billington sneered.

"Thy countenance is shining, as if she had given to thee, and not thee to herself."

"And she doth give me," was Stephen's answer. "Peace and friendship are no small gifts for any one to receive."

The chief, with two of his men, accompanied them when they took boat again. At Nauset the tide was low, and Alden did not wish to land. Night was falling, Indians surrounded the shallop. He was rather nervous, although he could not show the feeling, but must boldly send Squanto and two other natives ashore, peremptorily demanding the boy.

At sunset they saw a long train coming out of the woods. There were at least four hundred men, fantastically dressed, as was the smaller figure they were leading.

"Halloo, Johnny," called his father.

"Hush," Alden commanded. "We must do all here with care. Squanto, what is their answer?"

"You shall have the child."

A tall, brawny warrior seized Johnny in his arms. Every eye was bent upon him in feverish interest. But he bore his burden carefully, straight through the shallow water to the boat. The father reached out, and took

him to the seat beside himself. Alden poured forth a flood of thanks for Squanto to repeat.

"Ugh, those savages!" were the boy's first words. "They dwell like to the wild beasts. I am right glad to be with my own kind once more."

"They gave of their best and saved thy life," was John Alden's stern reproof. "Here, Johnny, hand this knife to him who brought thee to us. Send another to him who sheltered thee. Squanto, tell them they shall learn in the future the gratitude of the white men."

CHAPTER XX

THE RATTLESNAKE'S MESSAGE

As the chief was about to leave them he murmured something in Squanto's ear which caused the Indian to glance apprehensively towards his leader.

"Has anything gone wrong?" inquired John Alden.

"There is a revolt against Massasoit. He has joined battle with the Narragansetts," Squanto answered.

"And was Massasoit victorious?

"No."

Alden sprang to his seat in the stern, seizing the rudder ropes. "We must make haste to the Plantation. At any moment it may be attacked."

Each grew grave with thought of what might meet them upon their return. John Alden, looking at the mischievous, idle boy who had been the cause of their journey, wondered if his rescue were worth all it might have brought upon Plymouth.

Their relief and thankfulness were proportionately great when they found their home unmolested. Captain Standish, on learning their tidings, concluded to instantly dispatch Squanto with Hobbomak, another native ally, to fetch them further particulars of the war.

On a rainy August night Stephen and Johnny mounted guard. Walking back and forth, they presently spied a figure, tearing through the underbrush of the forest.

"'T is Hobbomak," cried Johnny to Stephen. "And he runs as if pursued!"

They rushed towards him, covering his body with their muskets, while he fell, exhausted, headlong in the street.

"Ask nothing of him," Governor Bradford directed, hurrying forward. "He must have a draught of water and rest for a little before he can speak. Then shall we hear all."

At the sound of his voice Hobbomak raised his head. "Squanto is dead," said he.

He sat up in a crouching posture while the men and boys drew nearer, leaning upon their guns. He appeared eager to tell his adventure.

"Corbitant, one of Massasoit's petty chiefs," he said, "has stirred up a rebellion against

him, on account of his alliance with the Pilgrims. This we were told at Namasket, where we entered a wigwam to sleep. At midnight we heard the war-cry. I sprang up, to find the hut surrounded, and Corbitant, knife in hand, leaning over Squanto. He called out: 'When this man is dead the palefaces will have lost their tongue.' I was attacked, but managed to escape. All day long I have been hiding in the woods and working my way towards you. And Squanto has been killed."

William Bradford stepped before the others.

"A council is called," his strong voice rang out, "to meet at once in the Commonhouse. All the men must be present."

Through the window those outside could catch the sound of the elder's tones raised in prayer; then one man and another advised or remonstrated. In ten minutes' time the door flew open, and Standish strode without, buckling on his sword as he came. Before he fairly crossed the threshold he began to call.

"These are to go with me: Isaac Allerton, Stephen Hopkins, Edward Winslow," — his eyes were roving hither and thither, selecting his company. Stephen realized that, as usual, of their twenty men and lads, half would be designated to go, and half to stay. He lis-

tened eagerly while the list went on: "John Alden, Peter Brown, William Brewster, John Billington, Samuel Fuller" — That was nine! — "Stephen Chisholm."

It had been decided that their tiny colony must impress its importance upon the many savages who surrounded it, by the immediate and severe vengeance of their interpreter's murder. Hobbomak marched on ahead with the captain, the others following, two and two, in the wet path between the dripping trees. It was so dark they could not see those in advance; often they were obliged to halt and pass back, from man to man, the whispered roll call, to know that their company kept together. Swaying twigs flew out and stung their faces like whips. The pattering rain and moaning wind covered the sound of their footsteps, when, about daybreak, they caught sight of the fires of Namasket.

Billington and Fuller, just ahead of Stephen and John Alden, passed back the word: —

"Halt!"

They could make out the captain's figure, passing along the line. His low, penetrating tones arrested all attention.

"When I say 'Plymouth,' Brewster and Hopkins are to fire. Then all, with muskets cocked, watch the hut whilst I enter" —

"Not alone?" faltered Stephen.

A gentle touch was felt upon his arm. A voice said softly to him: —

"Thou art ever mindful of my welfare, boy." And then aloud, "Hobbomak and Alden go with me, Winslow" —

An imploring hand stole into his in the darkness. He gave it a reassuring pressure. —"And young Chisholm. For the others, remain here as you are."

Those designated stepped noiselessly from the ranks. Standish moved on in advance, they close at his heels. So they stole up to the wigwam.

"Plymouth!" shouted the captain.

Two shots spat through the night stillness and echoed from the hills. There was a fearful yell as the guard sprang up. It was answered by the lusty cry of those who waited, and the five who rushed into the hut.

The fire burned low, but showed the floor covered with the figures of men, women, and children curled into uncouth forms of sleep. They started upright at the noise, a writhing, screaming mass of humanity. Standish leveled his gun, calling directions hurriedly meanwhile.

"Tell them, Hobbomak, that they are safe

so long as they stay here. Whoever tries to pass that door is a dead man."

The guttural warning was given. Standish spoke again.

"Tell them we demand Corbitant, the murderer of Squanto. If he is given up no one else shall be harmed."

It was doubtful if a word were understood. The savages were in an abject state of frenzy. One squaw threw herself against the door. Hobbomak drew his knife.

"No, no," screamed Standish. "Not a woman! Don't harm a woman. Only fight the men."

This, at least, was comprehended. The Indian boys, struggling to escape, set up a wild cry: "I am a girl! I am a girl!"

In the midst of the confusion Hobbomak proclaimed: "They say Corbitant is not here. He and his men have fled. And Squanto is still alive."

A cheer greeted this intelligence.

Hobbomak stepped out of the darkness, and called the interpreter. From the surrounding camp there rose a shrill whoop that they recognized. Squanto ran forward into the firelight.

The captain now demanded the surrender

of bows and quivers, set a further watch, and ordered his men to sleep. They were so exhausted that obedience was easy. It was broad day when Stephen awoke, and he opened his eyes to see his leader in the midst of a group of natives.

He reached out almost involuntarily for his musket. Billington laughed.

"Thou art as watchful of Standish as if he were the Snow King and would melt. The savages mean no harm. The captain is telling these that whosoever lift hand against us, or against Massasoit shall rue the day. Yet he hath offered to take their wounded to the Plantation and have them tended by the surgeon."

This warning to the red men sufficed — for the present. The summer passed in peace and quiet, within and without the colony.

One November day all the Plymouth boys were engaged in stacking wood when one of them happened to cast his eyes towards the water. They spied the most welcome of all sights, — a ship just entering the harbor.

"A sail, a sail!" he called, flying down into the settlement.

It proved to be the Fortune, with thirty-

five passengers for the colony, among whom were Frank Billington, and Barbara, sister to Rose Standish. The former did not inaugurate his coming by good deeds. He was disposed to be extremely friendly with Stephen, and one day they met on the steps of the Commonhouse.

As of old Frank was important with a bit of gossip.

"Hast heard of the declaration of war?" he inquired.

"War? With whom?"

"A Narragansett came running in just now, threw something within the council-house, and was about to escape when Master Winslow caught him."

"What brought he thus?"

"A bundle of arrows wrapped in the skin of a rattlesnake."

"And doth this mean defiance?" asked Stephen.

"A challenge not to be overlooked. Ah, here is Master Hopkins! He and Master Winslow have the messenger in charge; it may be they have questioned him still further."

Stephen Hopkins nodded as he caught the words. "It is all a curious tale. Squanto

made them believe that we English keep the plague in a barrel, and will loose it, if they displease us. Yet Canonicus' men, sent to make peace, four months since, brought him such news of our small numbers that, despite fear of the pestilence, they now declare a war."

He passed on in hurried strides. Stephen had noticed Frank's grin and turned sharply to say: —

"Knew you aught of this tale of the plague? Speak out!"

"Not to thee," said the other obstinately. "It is no affair of thine."

"Of mine and of us all if, through terror, the rattlesnake was sent."

"It was the only way we could master the savages," sulked Frank. "They far outnumber us."

"And you knew more than the governor or Master Standish?" Stephen retorted hotly. "I believe it was you, and no other, taught Squanto this piece of folly."

Frank gave a provoking smile, although he vouchsafed no reply. Fond as he was of imparting information, he did not intend to incriminate himself.

When William Bradford returned the

messenger to Canonicus, he carried the snake-skin stuffed full of bullets and powder. The chief, credulous of the magic powers of the Englishmen, dared neither to touch it, nor destroy it, nor allow it to remain among his people. He forwarded it to another tribe, and they, entertaining the same horror, sent it to another. So it traveled until, in time, it was returned to Plymouth.

In spite of this daring response the colony was ill at ease. Palisades were completed, a fort was raised, the men were thoroughly trained to action. They found that, by means of threats to incite bloodshed, Squanto was receiving bribes from the other natives. This was not an unnatural proceeding. He had been a person of no importance before the arrival of the Pilgrims, and he was a great man now. Stephen felt that Frank, not the ignorant Indian, was the arch-offender.

Meanwhile his own private affairs became once more of paramount importance. He was prepared, by what he saw and heard, for the captain's confidence, in the course of the winter, that Barbara had promised to be his wife. It was joyful news, both concerning them and in regard to himself. The new relation seemed to absolve the boy from his

promise to Rose. He advised with Elder Brewster and was encouraged to take passage in the vessel which stopped there in the early spring, on its way to Virginia. Everything was hastily arranged for his immediate departure, since now Stephen felt free, at last, to seek his brother Hugh.

They were sailing out of the harbor when the captain of the ship remembered a letter he had brought. He handed it to Stephen.

CHAPTER XXI

ORSON'S REVENGE

"HALLOO, Steenie!"

Stephen turned quickly on his heel. Johnny Billington had joined him.

"How came you here?" he stammered. "I saw nothing of you when we set sail."

Johnny hesitated. "You see — my father doth not know of the journey. I kept in hiding at the first lest he spy me and compel me to return."

Since Stephen would not comment upon this step, Johnny went on sulkily: "Frank helped me to flee. I would have your companionship, and it is what you are doing."

"With a difference," was the reply. "Elder Brewster gave consent, and Hugh stands in lieu of my guardian. It is not strange that I go without let to him. And there is this, Johnny. You shall go to South Virginia with never friend nor acquaintance."

"You will be there."

"Not I. The master saith that we are to

touch at the fort on Mauritius River. If that be so, I will tarry at Manhattan."

"Why is this?" demanded Johnny, deeply disappointed. "Your brother is not at the fort."

"One brother may be. I was even on shipboard when this letter was given to me, saying that John was shortly to set sail for New Netherland. By this he should be come, and I cannot pass by and not see him. If the ship land, I must see Jack."

He was arguing also to himself, for Stephen had a suspicion that this change in his plans was unwise. If he had received the letter before embarking it is probable that Captain Standish and William Brewster would have advised against it. Yet it was hard to forego the sight of one brother in the search for the other, and, after all, he might have been counseled to pursue the course he took.

After Henry Hudson's discovery of the river which now bears his name, certain Dutch fur traders traveled thither, in the next twelve months, accompanied by several of the Half Moon's crew. They called the River of the Mountains the Mauritius, in honor of Prince Maurice, and were followed, in 1611, by Block and Christiaensen, who brought back

to Europe two sons of the Indian chief visited by Hudson. A few houses, called Fort Manhattan, were built upon the island; the region was named New Netherland, and lay under a charter granted to an Amsterdam company.

Jack wrote to Stephen that this charter had recently expired. The States General refused to renew it, granting one instead to the Dutch West India Company, under whom he and his friends were to sail. The privileges of the organization were not obtained at once. There were claimants to be silenced, and exclusive powers in this part of the world to be tardily secured, although Stephen did not understand all this. He supposed Jack had had ample time to follow his message.

A stockade guarded the half-dozen huts along the southern shore of Manhattan, whither the longboat was sent off to barter in furs. A Dutchman returned with the crew. The mate spoke aside to the captain: —

"I can make nothing of the man, sir, save that he hath a grievance. Nor will he hark to trucking."

"Speaks he Dutch only?"

"So it would seem. Young Chisholm, here! Canst thou understand this fellow?"

Stephen advanced, and questioned the trader.

"He saith," so the boy interpreted, "that one Samuel Argall, an Englishman from Jamestown, came hither years ago, and did use them despitefully. They refuse commerce with his people."

"Tell him we had no part in the matter."

"I have told him, but he will not listen. They are enraged with all our countrymen."

"Then is there no need to tarry," complained the captain. "We must take advantage of the wind, and be away. Mason, carry the churl to land again, and — Chisholm, dost thou go?"

"Truly, sir, I wish nothing so much."

"Fetch thy belongings, then, and make all speed. I cannot wait thy pleasure."

Seeing that the man was disappointed and fretful, Stephen did not wait to question the Hollander, yet, despite his haste, he managed to say some words to Johnny, recommending him to Hugh's care. Little cause though he had to like the boy, he was glad afterwards that they had parted in kindness.

In a few flurried moments he was set upon the shore. Stephen stood watching the white sails as the ship sped away to sea, a new,

homesick pang at his heart. Finally he spoke to Barent Vroom.

"Do you know John Chisholm?"

"I never heard of him in my life."

For the first time Stephen felt alarm. "He is staying in the fort," he asserted positively.

"No, that he is not."

"It must be so. Listen to what he says." He proceeded to read from Jack's letter the passage relating to his plans.

The Dutchman led the way into the fort. "Don't be fretted," he observed kindly. "He may be still in Holland, if he is waiting for the West India Company. Or he may have only touched here and gone on up the river to Norman's Kill. A yacht sails tomorrow. Would you like to make the voyage and see?"

"I suppose it would be best," said Stephen dolefully. "I don't know what to do if he is not there."

"Return here, and wait till he does come," was the hospitable answer. "A sturdy young fellow like yourself can always earn his way."

With such comfort Stephen in due time was taken on board the little craft, introduced

to Hans Kip, the master, and again set out, this time for the north.

It was a charming country through which they passed, where Indians paddled from the forest shores, in their fragile canoes, to barter beaver skins for beads, knives, and hatchets.

"I should not think you would dare give them weapons," said Stephen, eying a fierce-looking native marching away with his axe.

"Oh, there is nothing to fear," was the easy answer. "They are kindly disposed towards us."

In the course of time they came to the ruins of Fort Nassau, upon Castle Island. This, the first building raised by white men in the State of New York, had been so injured in a freshet that it was abandoned and another trading-house set up at the mouth of Norman's Kill.

"Both commanded by Christiaensen," Kip observed. "And there is Eelkens, his right-hand man. He will take you in charge."

He proved a busy, bustling person, who informed Stephen directly that they had seen nothing of John here, but urged the boy to stay with them, sending word to Manhattan where he might be found. Men were needed in the fort, and Vroom had guessed rightly

that the newcomer could find a welcome anywhere. Stephen readily consented to this arrangement. During the transportation to shore he asked, glancing down at the pile of barter in the bottom of the boat: —

"Do you trade rum and guns with the savages?"

"Why not?"

"Why, the one will madden them, and the other will give their madness strength."

"There is no danger," said Eelkens. "Mad or sober, they are our friends. And they care for nothing so much as firewater or a musket. Just look at Orson waiting to meet us. See how proudly he carries his gun."

He indicated a red man watching the boat's approach, who was one of the youthful chieftains carried to Europe by Christiaensen in 1611. Stephen thought he had never seen so morose a face as that of the chief's son. Further acquaintance showed that Orson was always docile, yet his lowering countenance never lost its sly expression of ill will. Stephen could not comprehend how the others disregarded it.

The foundation of Fort Orange was laid that summer, when there was constant crossing of the river between the two depots. Chris-

tiaensen took the boy and Orson with him on one such excursion. They afterwards paddled on up the stream to inquire concerning buyers who had gone out among the Mohawks for pelts. Competition was already begun between the French on the north and the Dutch on the south, for this valuable trade.

"It is very strange about the reports," Christiaensen grumbled, leading the way back to the boat. "I suspect the French have been before us and secured the skins. It can't be that there was such a remarkably small yield! I would n't take any savage's word for it."

Orson stooped to pull up the canoe. The boy fancied that his face quivered, though he went on quietly with his work. Christiaensen paused, one foot on the bow, to retail his misusage.

"I don't believe," he repeated, "that those furs are all the Mohawks can scrape together. They have lied to us and sold them to the French! There is no trusting an Indian."

He stepped into the boat.

After his passengers were placed Orson seated himself and took up the paddle. In doing so he accidentally struck against the commander's gouty foot. Christiaensen was

irritated and tired. He leaned forward, aiming a blow full in the face of the chieftain.

Still Orson did not speak. He fixed his eyes upon the other for an instant, and there was a world of meaning in that look. Then he drew the hatchet from his belt. He slashed a line in the bottom of the birch canoe.

"What are you doing?" roared Christaensen. "You cannot swim."

"Nor can you, my master," said the Indian softly.

Water was bubbling, then bursting into the boat, which filled rapidly. Stephen answered the commander's frightened gaze.

"I will save you," he said in English. "I can keep us both afloat."

Christiaensen understood. Perhaps the savage, too, guessed the assurance given. He grasped his hatchet with his left hand, his right arm remaining free.

So the canoe settled until only a rim rose above the water. Stephen struck out, swimming towards the commander, the boat's length away.

He saw Christiaensen clutch the bow and keep up by it still. He saw Orson raise his axe to strike at those clinging hands. Before

he could reach them the wounded man had thrown up his arms. The savage seized him in his powerful grasp. There was a second's struggle.

The water splashed and grew calm again. Stephen was alone upon the river, whence boat and companions had disappeared.

Eelkens' men at the fort were amazed when a dripping form pulled itself to the dock edge, and so on land. Pushing his wet hair out of his eyes, and blowing the water from his mouth, Stephen gasped those words of Scripture: —

"'And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.'"

"What do you mean?" asked Eelkens. "Where is the commander?"

"Drowned in the Mauritius. And Orson, his murderer, sank in his grasp."

"This sounds like the talk of a madman," said Eelkens, eying the boy askance. He really thought the lad had lost his senses.

"It was the deed of a madman. And the weapon was that you Dutch have given to the Indians."

CHAPTER XXII

HUGH MAKES A PURCHASE

It could not be supposed that Hugh was less eager than Stephen for their meeting. While the latter made arrangements toward the journey his older brother also looked to a speedy union.

"When the tobacco hath been gathered," said he, "I shall send to the North Virginia plantation for little Stephen."

"That it is all very well," growled Allen. "But it were better did you bring hither no more men nor boys until, first of all, you betook yourself to Jamestown to buy a wife."

"Hath the new shipload come?"

"So Anne Vernon told me this evening. Ah, there is a clever maid! Her dad hath no need of a second wife, while she looks to all within doors, and Richard is free to go to his work in the field, or to see that his negars work for him."

African slaves had been introduced into America about the time that the first charter

of free government was issued. However it was not of this that Hugh was thinking, nor of Allen's often-repeated hint, calling his attention to their neighbor, pretty Anne Vernon.

"I have no wish for a wife," said he.

"The place hath wish for one. It is going to rack, in want of what none save a woman can do."

"I thought, Allen, your sailor handiness served us well as any woman."

Allen's wrinkled face brightened at the compliment. "The thing stands thus, lad. You must buy a wife, or I must purchase one for myself. The notion is displeasing to me. Yet if you are stiffnecked, I shall pay my one hundred and twenty pounds, and take the girl. We must have a wife here. Look upon your garments! Look upon mine own! I can sew a bit, with my palm and needle, on rough cloth. These gay stuffs are beyond my cunning."

Hugh was a quiet, reserved sort of fellow, not in the least like his impulsive brother Jack, yet at this moment he felt a desire to speak out what had long been in his heart.

"To tell the truth," he began, "there was a maid, when I was a little lad in Eng-

land, should I meet again, I would right gladly ask to wed with me."

"That was ten years since," Allen observed practically. "You could not meet now, if you sought her."

"I have sought."

"I thought as much. Nor will she come seeking you. Be wise, Hugh, and choose from the threescore that are waiting at James City. Shall we sail thither on the morrow?"

Hugh was amused by the man's persistency. "We will go," he said, "and it may be you shall find a mate. I do not pledge me that I will buy one for myself."

Still each man provided himself with the price set, one hundred and twenty pounds of tobacco. At least, they enjoyed the sail on the beautiful river, while Hugh made merry with the other settlers who pushed out from shore, bound upon the same errand.

By and by the island of Jamestown came in sight. They landed at the pier, and walked along the water's edge. A din of bargaining, coaxing, and coqueting was guide to the marriage market. Sixty young women were crowded at the ship's side or scattered along the dock, in conversation with intending purchasers. The group of newcomers paused to gaze upon their proceedings.

Hugh caught many an admiring glance cast upon his pleasant English features and the bright boyish look he had kept throughout ten years. It was inevitable that one who had known him then should recognize him now.

"Good-day to you, Hugh Chisholm," said a soft voice close to his elbow.

A young girl, her brown eyes downcast, stood close beside him. Allen had moved away in his impatience. The other intending buyers had followed him. These two were by themselves.

"I beg your pardon," Hugh said. "Your voice hath a familiar tone. And there is a look in your eyes — Yet I cannot call you by name."

The girl looked up at him demurely. "'T is the same old honest Hugh. He would make no pretense that he remembered, if it were not true."

"Mary! It is thee? How could I have been so blind?"

He caught her hands in his strong grasp. "Oh, my sweet maid, but thou art well come!"

Mary Taylor laughed nervously.

"I thought I should find thee, Hugh!"

They turned their backs upon the loud chaffing of the boat. Hand in hand they walked together, along the bank by the river.

"Here in James City," said Hugh, "in yonder church the clergyman waits to marry the men and maids when they leave the ship. Mary, wilt thou wed me there?"

"Not yet, lad," she stammered, "we have but met together."

"I will be good to thee."

"Did I not guess as much when I crossed the seas to seek thee? Nay, Hugh. We need more time to think, to know one another as man and woman — we who have but met, ere this, as boy and girl. Give me a little time."

"That will I," the kindly fellow assented. "I will carry thee to" — he thought for a moment — "to my friend, Master Berkeley. He and his wife will gladly take thee to bide with them at Falling Creek. How this will rejoice my dear old Allen's heart."

He looked around. "Whither hath he strayed?"

A disconsolate voice hailed him, and the old sailor came running along the pier. His face was woe-begone.

"I have found a maid," he said. "She hath big hands, and a pair of shoulders that

could carry an ox. She can wait upon us right well. But, Hugh, I would not marry." He looked piteously at his companion. "Will you not buy her for yourself?"

Hugh shook his head. "What if there is a way out?"

"There is none. Have I not searched for it?"

"Mine came to me, with none of my seeking. Here, Allen," he led the man to Mary. "You remember our talk of the only maid in the world for me, the child whom I knew when I was a child, and was carried away from my mother?"

"This is never she?"

Mary curtseyed prettily. "It is the same girl, who would beg a welcome from Hugh's friend, no less than from himself."

Be sure that it was given ungrudgingly. Hugh paid for his bargain and set out to find Mistress Berkeley. She was delighted to receive the prospective bride into her own family for a time, and the party ascended the river together, Hugh pointing out, by the way, every object of interest, endeared to him since he now had Mary to share it.

Presently the home of the Berkeleys came in sight, near the furnace. Master Berkeley

led the way, happy to offer the easy hospitality which has never died out in the Southern States. There was food brought forth, and the men seated themselves upon the porch, where the host proposed that Allen and Hugh "drink" a pipe of tobacco with him. As they sat thus together, the sailor asked in a low, mysterious voice : —

"Master Berkeley, hast heard anything concerning the death of Jack o' the Feather?"

"There have been news of it from those who visited my sportsman. I harkened not."

"The savages are roused concerning the affair. So I learned at James City and from your men since we reached Falling Creek."

"The fellow died by law. He did murder to a settler, and was killed. His friends cannot complain."

"They do complain."

"Allen is always foreboding evil from the savages," Hugh broke in. "Often have I argued with him that they have been conquered once for all. I prophesy that we shall never more see trouble with them."

"So say I," assented Berkeley, rising. "They have learned who are their masters."

"And they have learned of what sort are

their masters' weapons," Allen interrupted. "However — we can but be upon our guard! I would not that the women heard there was cause for alarm."

"Nor is there. Two or three savages sulking together mean nothing. Well, friends, what say you? Shall we to bed and to sleep? The hour is late. By daybreak, good Allen, thy fears will have taken flight, like to bats and owls."

Allen smiled grimly and did not reply.

On the following morning Hugh and he went back to Henricus. When they drew near the town Hugh looked across to rally his comrade.

"There is Nautaquaus laden with game," said he. "That appears like good will, Allen."

"I have made up my mind," was the response, "that one never may tell, from a savage's actions, what are his true feelings. And I have watched them well."

"It is useless to say more," Hugh reflected, and, landing, greeted the brother of Pocahontas with considerable warmth. The chieftain was persuaded to spend the night at Henricus and sup upon the food he had brought with him.

"But I must leave you at dawn," he insisted.

The young host was so elated by his good fortune that he became unusually talkative. He told Nautaquaus of his prospects, while the Indian listened and questioned him.

"The maiden is with Mistress Berkeley, then?"

"Yes. She will live at Falling Creek until our wedding in the early autumn. — Why, Allen, what has gone wrong?"

Hugh stared from the bird he was carving at the old sailor, who was winking, frowning, and shaking his head. Now he scowled more fiercely than ever.

"Naught hath gone wrong — or all," he said in English, "since thou hast spoken, and there was no stopping thee."

Hugh laughed at his excess of caution and dismissed it from his mind. But when, the next morning, Allen announced significantly that a Christian Indian wished to see his master, that youth lost his patience.

"Your brain is turning on this matter," he cried. "What would the fellow with me? Let him come in, and have done."

"I know not his business," was the sober answer. "But if the matter is no more to

thy liking than his manner is to mine, thou wilt cease to smile at me and my warnings."

"Bid him enter," said Hugh.

The red man showed a painful hesitation, his step lagging, his features quivering with pain. Falling on his face, he kissed the ground and cried: —

"Oh, my lord, shall I betray my people, or must I give up my faith to destruction? I am between two fires."

"What do you mean?"

Hugh's voice was shrill and vehement.

"My Christian brethren are dear to me — yes, dearer than my own family of the forest. Master, I must speak!"

"Say on."

"To-night, should the white man seek his home, ashes will smoke where a house has stood. Yet he shall not know nor grieve. His blood will be shed on his own hearth-stone, and no one live to tell the tale. Women, and old men, and little children — all shall be cut off."

CHAPTER XXIII

JACK O' THE FEATHER'S FRIENDS

"MARY!" cried Hugh.

He sprang towards the door. On the threshold stood Allen, who gave one glance into the young man's face.

"Is it an uprising?" he asked.

"A general massacre. Let me pass. I must go to Mary."

"We must warn James City."

They stared blankly at each other. Hugh's hand dropped by his side; his face set in an expression of determination.

"I will ride Duke down the river. You must hasten to Falling Creek with the roan."

"Nay, nay, lad! Go thou to Master Berkeley and thy maid. I will start this moment for Jamestown." He limped towards the stable.

But Hugh remembered their recent journey; he knew that the old sailor was not fit for the longer ride. The other was difficult enough. And if he should fail —

He ran after him, catching up a saddle on his way.

"I will give the alarm to our neighbors," he said, leading out his horse. "And, Allen, I must go to James City. You have not the strength. Fly for your life — for Mary's life — to Falling Creek! 'T is but some five leagues, or six. You can do that?"

His voice held a painful question. Allen assented.

"I can do that — in time, if God will. Yet I would that it were thou. I am not so stricken in years. I can make the ride to Jamestown."

"It is not to be thought of," Hugh said, and vaulted into the saddle.

Allen brought the roan alongside him. The old man and the youth looked into each other's eyes.

"The Lord be with you," said Allen.

He used the familiar words of the service in which they had taken part, Sunday after Sunday, for three peaceful, prosperous years.

Hugh's answer was the response: —

"And with thy spirit."

Their hands clasped. They rode side by side to the stockade gate. Hugh drew rein for one second.

"Take care of my dear maid, Allen."

"Thou knowest it. Farewell."

"Farewell."

As Hugh clattered down the street, he presently spied Richard Vernon, riding placidly from an inspection of his fields.

"Where now?" he called.

Hugh guided Duke so close that their spurs clanked together.

"To warn James City. Do you spread the news here. There is a savage uprising. They will fall on the plantations to-day."

"Impossible!"

"Cavil not, but go. Hark you, I speak the truth."

With that he had touched his steed's side lightly. Already they were the horse's length away. The planter looked after the flying pair, who moved like parts of one machine.

"He believes the tale," he muttered. "I doubt it, yet — the only way is to act as if I believed it, too!"

He wheeled about, and rode from house to house, leaving the message that had been delivered to him.

On and on sped Hugh. When he reached Varina, he shouted his direful intelligence, with but a moment's slackening of the rein.

Away again to Curles and Shirley, and

by and by Wyanoke came into sight. So far, except for the heavy heart he bore in his breast, it had all been like many a pleasure trip along the river banks. At each settlement he was received with incredulity. The planters entertained only a good-natured contempt for those natives who frequented their homes utterly without restraint.

On went Hugh towards James City.

The birds were singing among the trees, whose leaves were in their tender green of spring. The river crooned a happy song. Was it not all a dream? Had he imagined that interview with his Indian convert? For here was the world, in sweet solitude, with no sign, save his own frantic clamor, of anything amiss.

A tongue of flame darted into the soft blue sky. It hung over Flower de Hundred. A shrill scream broke across the silence. It was the war cry.

In taking horse, instead of his boat, Hugh had realized that he could not alarm the towns on the western shore. They must be left to the ferries, and the good offices of their nearest neighbors. Duke was the surest and swiftest conveyance. To try to do everything was to do the least.

A hideous din came over the James. There was the triumphant yell of savages, the crack of muskets, the piteous appeal for mercy to women and children, the hoarse defiance of men at bay. The flames increased. A broad blaze spread, to fly up and down through the houses to the encircling woods. The hot breath of the fire was blown to them; the smoke smote their eyes and nostrils, causing Duke to plunge frantically forward.

"Steady, good boy, steady," urged Hugh, his hand closing upon the rein. "And more speed still, my horse, or we shall be too late."

Over those rough roads, leaping fallen logs, avoiding roots and entangling thickets, under the burning southern sun, they had come more than twenty miles, by the river's windings, when they drew up at Wyanoke. Hugh need not urge his warning here, since he could point to blazing Flower de Hundred. Between him and Jamestown there now remained only one settlement on his side the stream. But the Chickahominy must first be crossed. If the boat were not at hand he and Duke would have to swim a stream swollen by spring rains. He knew the roan could never have endured that morning's work. He thought of Allen. By this time he

must have reached the Berkeleys. What had he found?

He gave a bitter groan. "I cannot dwell upon that! I must keep my strength for what lies before me. Faster, boy, faster! We have yet many miles to go."

He saw the flames burst out at Martin's Brandon. He heard a horrid uproar which he braced himself to endure. There was nothing to do, nothing save set his teeth, bend to the pommel, and urge on his tired horse. The Chickahominy banks appeared. No, the ferry was on the farther shore. Hugh guided his steed northward to a narrower turn, and to the water's brink.

Sometimes this would have been sport for them both. Now the exhausted beast resented the added task, stamping and plunging in fury. Hugh held in his own temper with a force like the firm hand on the rein. By whip and spur he compelled Duke to enter the water; he urged and praised their progress step by step.

As he had feared, they were soon beyond foothold in the rushing yellow flood. Again the horse snorted and strove to turn in midstream. Hugh dug in the spurs. Holding his gun above the water with one hand, with

the other he patted, coaxed, encouraged Duke. He felt the body beneath him stretch out to swim. He drew a long breath of relief.

It was not far from the bank. In another moment they were landed, dripping, chilled, in spite of that glorious sunlight, hurrying on to the island. Evidently the assault had, so far, been entirely confined to the western side of the James. Hugh watched every swaying bough. He eyed every great tree trunk, with a dread of a shower of arrows or the sharp report of a musket. There was no ambush. In silence and safety he rode down to Jamestown.

Duke stumbled painfully. Hugh must give a guidance never relaxed to his course. Now that his long ride was ending he, too, gave way. He caught at the pommel to steady himself. All grew black before him, the trees marched round and round, a crow that darted across the sky seemed falling into his lap. When he raised his voice, by a last supreme effort, to hail the ferry, he had come full forty miles and had covered them in six hours.

He reached the island, and urged poor Duke along the streets, behind the palisade

guarded by cannon, up to the log church where the House of Burgesses was in session. He left his horse at the door and entered the building.

The governor and council sat in the front seats, the twenty-two members of the Assembly in the choir. Hugh felt every eye upon him while he strode up the aisle. He was coated from head to foot with dust that plastered his wet clothing, his long hair hung in damp curls about his white, worn face, his hands shook so that the gun they held clattered against the floor.

"I am come to warn you," this visitor burst forth. "Cobham is on fire! The savages are risen! They vow to spare no life!"

His voice sank lower and lower until it died away. Hugh fell forward and, had it not been for those who sprang to support him, he would have measured his length upon the floor.

While they brought out food and drink, there came to them through the air the exultation of the Indians, above the whiz of their arrows, the twang of the bow, the bullet from their guns, as they advanced upon Jamestown. Fortunately the warning was in time. When a score of canoes approached,

they found men and ammunition prepared. The outlying settlements would be easier prey, they thought, and paddled away to find them.

Hugh was not to be detained by any persuasion. He mounted a fresh horse and cantered briskly away.

On every side now the hand of destruction had fallen. Smoking, blackened ruins showed where prosperous homes had stood; dead bodies, mutilated beyond recognition, were scattered along his path. The savages had disappeared, their work done. There was the same stillness that had brooded over the stretch of colony when Hugh set out upon his morning ride.

Dusk was falling as he reached Henricus. He found the town little the worse for a short though severe attack, during which its protection had been secure. The slaves, clustering about their master, told him the Indians had soon abandoned the siege to go elsewhere.

"Has Allen returned?" he asked.

No one had seen him.

Hugh caught up a loaf of brown bread and a slice of beef. He ran out to the stable, eating as he went.

"Saddle me Vixen," he commanded, "and make haste! Should Allen come while I am gone, tell him we missed each other upon the way. He will understand."

"Master, you cannot ride farther," some one began.

"I tell thee I must! Stand thou aside."

Those fifteen miles were beaten out in the regular rhythm of the horse's hoofs upon the road. At Wilton there was the old story of utter ruin. Now the chimneys of Berkeley's smelting-works rose dark against the sky. They still stood. Hugh's heart gave a happy throb. He rode on up to the stockade.

He saw within a smouldering pile, from which a curl of smoke went wavering into the air. A dead man lay at his feet. He did not know the marred features. A figure leaned, where it had been shot, propped against the charred wood of the doorway. Hugh approached and peered down, by the cold moonlight, into the face.

It was Allen.

CHAPTER XXIV

FOR POCAHONTAS' SAKE

When Powhatan died in 1618, another member of the family, Opechancanough, assumed authority. This mysterious person was said by the Indians to be a visitant from the far southwest, predestined to rule over them, and to cut off the English.

No sooner was the new chief come to his own than he evolved a plan to destroy the colonies. For four years this scheme was working itself out, nor was it betrayed, although thousands of savages were in the secret. The death of Jack o' the Feather was the determining cause which set the final day.

During that awful home ride Hugh had seen, at Berkeley, the hacked and bleeding body of Master Thorpe, who was one of Opechancanough's most faithful friends. He thought, with sickening horror, of Natauquaus, wondering whither he had bent his steps on that fearful morning. He soon learned the man had disappeared upon the western road

— the road that led to Falling Creek. So Mary was lost to him through his own folly; he had shown his savage guest the swiftest and surest method of injuring Hugh Chisholm.

Meanwhile, what of the girl and her friends?

"The dogs bark as if a wolf were about," said Mistress Berkeley, while the family sat at breakfast. "The noise makes my flesh creep. Pray send some one to cease their clamor."

She spoke to her husband, looking behind him to where an Indian boy was wont to stand, waiting upon them at their meals.

"Where is that rogue?" cried the master. "Why — What meaneth this? They have all disappeared!"

Truly, of the half-dozen natives who were usually lounging about the room, in more or less pretense of assistance, not one was to be seen. All had glided softly, unnoticed, away.

Master Berkeley pushed back his chair. Why should Allen's warning come suddenly to his mind? For of course there was nothing wrong. Yet what a hush had fallen upon the house.

"Is anything gone wrong?" asked Mary in an undertone.

"I feel," said her hostess suddenly, "as if — the Judgment Day had come!"

Still not a sound to break the spell! Master Berkeley rose and strode to the door.

"We shall soon see what hath happened," he observed, pulling at the hasp.

This was the signal. A volley of shot ensued, raining in upon them. Berkeley had the wit to fling himself on the floor, but not before a bullet was buried in one arm. His body lay at the threshold. Mary sprang across the room and slid the bolt into its socket. A fierce yell arose from the outer side of the frail barrier. Mistress Berkeley ran to the one window. A hideous face peered in at her and a gun was leveled.

She threw herself, like her husband, flat upon the ground, out of the musket's range. She whispered to Mary, still standing at the door: —

"Steal along the wall towards the gun. Seize it and aim it at the window."

Mary obeyed, with eyes bent upon the man at the casement. Keeping beyond his range, she flattened herself against the wall, edging along it to the gun in the corner. She

grasped it at the same moment that Mistress Berkeley, crawling to the table, had pulled from it a long carving knife. Turning like a fury, she tossed the glittering blade with such force that it struck full in one shoulder of the Indian. He dropped over upon his back. Before another could take his place the woman had darted from the room to the adjoining tool shed. Here she found a hatchet for herself, and an axe which she brought to her husband.

Meanwhile Mary guarded the door, in which a score of tomahawks were making a formidable breach. When this would admit the gun barrel she inserted it and fired. A sharp cry answered the report.

A long, dark hand thrust itself through the aperture seeking the bolt. Berkeley smote it with his weapon, hideous screams following the blow. Another man attempted to climb in at the narrow window, raising himself on his arms. Mistress Berkeley attacked him with her hatchet, and he toppled back, streaming with blood.

There followed a confused chatter. Then all noise died away; window and door were unassailed.

"Have they departed, think you?" Mary inquired, loading her gun.

Berkeley gave a mirthless smile at the idea. "They only plan some new device. We must be prepared for the worst."

His wife coughed warningly. He looked towards her, and she pointed upwards. A sound came from the roof.

"They are trying the chimney," said she in a whisper.

This would be feasible, since the fire upon the hearth had died to ashes. The Berkeleys had been annoyed, of late, by thievish servants, so that each room which they were not occupying at the moment was barred from the intrusion of the field hands who might profit by that opportunity to carry off small prizes. The kitchen, necessarily open to every one, was detached from the house. Thus the only free entrance was by such method as this.

They heard the scramble of feet along the low roof. At the same time another savage came to the window, and the shower of tomahawks against the door began once more. The cunning red men had separated their forces in order to divide those of the besieged.

An inspiration came to Mary.

"Stay you here," she said to Berkeley; and

leaving the threshold to him, she ran into another room. She pulled the feather bed from a couch and staggered back with it, dragging it along the floor.

"What will you with that?" demanded Berkeley curiously.

His wife gave an exultant laugh. "I know!"

Mary tugged away until she had reached the hearth. As she poked her burden into the cavernous depths, a dangling figure swung down to meet it. She stirred the embers to a glow, the feathers, a sheet of flame, blazing instantly up the chimney. The hanging form disappeared, as if it were a jumping-jack and some one had pulled the string. There were grunts and groans from the roof; then there came the clattering fall of lithe bodies dropping to the ground.

All had relaxed their vigilance in watching the success of this stratagem. Now Berkeley was grasped by the arm. He swung back his axe — too late. An Indian stood over him, musket aimed. Mistress Berkeley uttered a scream, raising her hatchet upon the intruder, whom husband and wife recognized as the brother of Pocahontas.

Natauquaus pushed the man aside; he

knocked Mistress Berkeley's weapon to the floor, with his gun, in passing. Going straight to Mary Taylor, he seized her by the arm.

"Come," said he.

She gave a heart-piercing appeal for help. But through the neglected entrance the savages were streaming in an irresistible flood. Natauquaus caught Mary in his arms; surrounded by his friends he carried her away.

Outside the house, in the midst of the Indians, shooting, yelling, springing into the air, there stood a horse, with ears cocked and eyes protruding in alarm. Mary's captor lifted her up on the plunging animal and sprang into the saddle. Another man threw him the reins. Natauquaus hit the frightened horse with his free hand, one arm still holding the girl. They wheeled about and were gone.

He struck out at once for the depths of the woods, yet not before Mary's eyes and ears had learned what would haunt them all the rest of her life. She saw valiant settlers fighting for their wives and children. She saw clubs and tomahawks at play, supplementing the more merciful destruction of the guns. She witnessed such horrors, she listened to such piteous outcries, that human

endurance could bear no more, and she fainted.

When she again realized her surroundings, the horse was picking his path in the forest through which not a sign of trail existed. The Indian held her in her seat, but spoke no word. As the sun stood in mid-heaven they paused beside one of the many small tributaries of the James. Natauquaus swung her to the ground, placed her upon a mossy tree stump, and brought her a sip of water in a folded leaf.

For the first time Mary's hope revived. Could she have been intended for torture, and yet be thus gently treated? She glanced at the dark features bending over her.

"You kill me?" she asked.

The young chief shook his head.

"You take me — where?"

"Take you — ship," said he. "You go way. All white man killed. No white man here."

"All white man killed?" repeated poor Mary.

"Hugh no killed. Red man tell him. Hugh good man. Hugh good friend Amonate. You know Amonate?"

"Nay."

"White man say Pocahontas. Pocahontas one name; Amonate one name; Matoax true name; my sister."

"Was Pocahontas your sister?"

He bowed gravely. "Hugh good friend Amonate. Hugh no killed. You no killed. You Hugh's squaw."

Then Mary understood. "Whither are you leading me?" she demanded.

"James City. You go ship. You go way. No good here. White man all killed."

"All but Hugh. How shall Hugh find me, if I go away on the ship?"

Natauquas reflected for a little. He was conscious that, should the girl send a verbal message by him, Hugh might well, after to-day, regard it as a trap. His shrewdness, fostered by an existence which must often rely upon ready wit, cast about for an expedient. He pulled a leaf and tore a thorn from a clambering vine.

"You do this?" said he.

He was mimicking the action of penmanship.

Mary nodded. "But I have no quill nor paper."

He touched the ribbon upon her cap and the pin that held her ruff in place.

"Here quill. Here paper."

Mary smiled and obeyed. She spread the ribbon tautly across her lap. With the long pin she pricked a sentence.

"Whither doth the ship sail?" she inquired.

"Dutch ship. Bring negars. White man, he say, go Mauritius."

Accordingly Mary traced the words: —

"I am gone to New Netherland," and handed the scrap of silk to him.

He regarded it with the awe his father had felt when he saw that such an instrument could tell a story as plainly as if it spoke. Finally, he urged her very kindly: —

"We go now. We go far — and slow."

So they rode on together. Natauquaus believed the colony was wiped out. Still, he knew the English were good fighters. He understood that from henceforth it was war to the death between his people and any who should survive. He could not risk all by conducting Mary to Hugh; he could only convey her out of the country with all possible speed. Through ways that he and his alone were aware of, that the settlers had never found, he led her down to the island. At the river bank he pulled a canoe from

its hiding-place, seating her within it. He showed her how to wield the paddle, and pointed out a ship lying, not far distant, at anchor.

"There safe," he said. "You go. You tell white man all killed. You go. Farewell!"

Before she could utter more than the echo of his last word he was gone. She looked about for him in vain.

CHAPTER XXV

THE BOY BY THE WAYSIDE

With the sensation of moving in a nightmare from which he must presently awaken, Hugh searched the ruins of Master Berkeley's home. He recognized none of those charred and distorted figures which he unearthed from underneath the blackened rafters, when he laid five motionless forms upon the grass in the moonlight. These were the only trace he could discover of all the servants and the family.

He made a wide, shallow trench, and placed the victims side by side in reverent order in this last bed, covering it over, smoothing the earth, and marking the spot. When all was ready he said the burial service, which had grown sadly familiar to him in the old time of the famine. This done, Hugh mounted his horse, and turned its head towards Henricus.

Now that all incitement to further exertion was gone, he began to feel the full effects of the strain and work of the past twenty-four

hours. On arriving at home he threw himself, fully dressed, upon the bed, and lost remembrance even of his sorrow in a heavy sleep.

He was roused by a loud knocking at the door. His servant entered.

"Master Godkin is here," said the man, "from down the shore near Jamestown. He is rousing the country."

Hugh staggered to his feet, rubbing his eyes. Then it was no dream!

"Bid him come in," he said.

A stranger appeared in the doorway.

"Thank God for any one left alive!" he cried in salutation. "But now it is our turn. I bear an order from James City. We are to fall upon the savages."

Hugh knew that it was the only way to build up the colony, to preserve the lives of these settlers who remained. Yet he shuddered at the necessity.

"You are too soft-hearted," said his guest. "If you had fought single handed, against a pack o' grinning fiends; if you had seen home and friends destroyed, escaping yourself, as by a miracle" —

"'My house is left unto me desolate,'" interrupted Hugh, quoting Scripture, after

the custom of the time. "My roof remains, but they who were to share it with me have been cruelly done to death."

There was many a terrible reminiscence to exchange as they proceeded on their road to Jamestown, nor did they travel alone. Others joined them until it was a cavalcade of fierce and furious men that rode along the river. On every hand were signs of yesterday's conflict. As they neared the home of Master Godkin, he leaned over and said to Hugh in a shocked, low tone: —

"Is that not the body of a boy there — yonder in the clump of underbrush by the stream?"

"So it seems. And what of that? Woe is me, we have often seen the like this day!"

Godkin guided his horse nearer to the pathetic sight. "'T is the lad," said he, "who came to us the night before — before this happened. He was on his way to Henrico City. We gave him shelter, and he left us at daybreak. I asked myself what had come to him. Poor child, now I know!"

Hugh alighted from his horse, looking down at the little fellow. He had been struck from behind by a club, and had fallen on his side, dead at that first blow.

"I have a brother about his age," said Hugh softly. "Whence came he?"

"From the Plymouth Plantation."

"What say you?" Hugh started, aghast. "And on his way to Henricus?"

"To Henricus — Oh, now I mind me! It had gone, in all that came after: he asked for one Master Chisholm, and said that he would seek him. Was your brother at Plymouth?"

"'T is Stephen himself!"

"Are you sure?" insisted another of the men. "Can you swear to the child's features?"

"That I cannot. I never saw Steenie in all my days, and yet he was right dear to me. Oh, mother's baby, what an end for thee!"

Hugh had not wept when he buried his friends at the ruins of Falling Creek. Now, kneeling beside Johnny Billington's body, his tears fell upon the white face upturned to his. His companions were compassionate to his grief. Yet they could do nothing save help him lay the boy in the grave they dug, before they rode away again, and on to Jamestown.

Here Hugh was made one of a party to transfer food and arms, that night, under

cover of the darkness. He was groping along the path to the stockade when he heard the soft sound of breathing close against his cheek. He had caught no sign of an approaching footstep; still a voice whispered:

"Mary Taylor — she live!"

It was the guttural tone of an Indian, using broken English. Natauquaus feared, in the present mood of the white men, the first word in his own tongue would be the signal for his murder.

"Who goes there?"

"Hist! No more! Hugh come water — lone — cockcrow. I tell him, Mary, she live!"

Hugh broke into a torrent of questions. It was useless; his informant had vanished.

He went at once to the governor, and was advised to seek the rendezvous. A watch was promised him, in case of treachery; but when he said that he thought the speaker had been Pocahontas's brother, the official was inclined to consider it a true warning.

Hugh climbed down to the shore just as the first call of chanticleer began. He was alone, although a guard was concealed by the stockade, and he was heavily armed.

Presently Hugh heard the muffled paddle of a canoe. He saw a dark form leap to

land, and glide from tree to tree, skirting the water, till it came close to him.

"Natauquaus," he murmured. "Is it you?"

"Yes, Hugh. I have come to tell you of Mary."

They spoke freely now, in the language they had so often employed together.

"What have you done with her?"

"This will tell you." Something was thrust into his hand. Hugh felt along its soft length. It seemed like a bit of ribbon.

"Has she sent a message to me?"

"Yes, to tell where she has gone. She was not harmed. No gun nor club came near her. I know, for I carried her away."

Hugh took a step towards the native.

"Why have you done this for me, and such harm — such woeful harm — to the other colonists?"

Natauquaus' features glowered, in the moonlight, like those of a demon.

"The white men came to our home," said he, "and took our lands away. In return, they gave us water that eats like fire into the brain and burns up all our wits" —

"They gave you the guns you used against them," said Hugh sternly.

"Yes. Not one good gift have we from the white men: only evil drink, or weapons with which to kill. Why should we not hate your people? We were more prospercus before they came. We shall never prosper again until they are gone. And so we mean to be rid of them."

It was vain to pursue the argument. Powhatan's son could not be made to see the other side — such as it was — of the picture.

"But why was I saved, Natauquaus?" Hugh gently persisted. "Why did you spare Mary the fate of Mistress Berkeley?"

"Do you remember the day," was the prompt response, "when Amonate was carried away by Argall? Yours was the only paleface that was turned towards her in pity. You alone were a friend to Amonate."

"That was all years ago."

"Years are nothing to us. We never forget. I knew you were to be warned: the fool who left our religion could not hide his purpose from me. But I saved her without whom your own life would have been no welcome gift."

In Hugh's relief, he poured thanks upon Natauquaus, and would have added money were this not refused with scorn.

"It was not done for pay," said the red man.

They parted forever. Henceforth it would be war between their peoples until one or the other was absolute conqueror. Hugh went back to the town, dismissed the guard, and roused the governor and council, embracing the earliest opportunity to inspect the strange letter Mary had sent him. It was spread out on the oaken table where the Assembly brought their heads together over it, spelling out the awkward lettering. Some one exclaimed: —

"There was the Dutch trader who caught the first favoring gale, and was away that night. Lad, she has eight-and-forty hours the start of thee."

"You think me free to follow her?"

Hugh looked eagerly towards the speaker. He, in his turn, caught the governor's eye.

"Surely none of us would lightly come between these true hearts," he urged. "Think you, how many have been severed here! And they have stood the trial of long separation; they had but met, after many years. I say they should not be parted now."

The governor drummed uncertainly upon the board. "There are deeds at hand," said

he, "that call for every man of us. And yet — were a ship in the harbor" —

"That will not be long to seek."

"Were one here, I say — for all this concerning the lovers is true — I would not withhold young Chisholm from the journey."

Hugh gazed about him wistfully. He had never shirked his duty. They knew it who remembered — and now were ready to reward — his ride to Jamestown. But it seemed to him that he could bear no more. The thought of the girl's flight, without a friend to help or to meet her, was bitter enough even were it not coupled with the horror that he must remain behind, upon an errand of remorseless slaughter among those men by whom, after all, he had been warned, and Mary rescued.

"Let us cast ballots upon the matter," proposed the clergyman.

The Assembly expressed their approval. They had heavy work ahead of them, yet every man, in that time of universal suffering, was touched by the history of Mary and Hugh. One by one, as their names were called, they decided the youth's immediate future. He was given unanimous consent to leave the colony.

The predicted opportunity soon arrived,

when the Henricus home was left in charge of a neighbor. Hugh had been prudent and saved the greater part of his earnings; many offers of money were extended, but there was no need to accept them. One spring morning he turned his back upon Virginia. The river was traversed to the sea, the last strip of land faded out of sight, the white sails spread to the ocean, and carried him away to the north.

CHAPTER XXVI

WESTON'S MEN

During all this time Stephen awaited his brother. When, not quite seeing to what to set his hand, John went to Leyden and Master Robinson for advice, he found his old pastor re-reading a letter from Plymouth.

This told of Stephen's departure for South Virginia, of his change of plan and his present life on the Mauritius. It also spoke of the Jamestown massacre and the report that had reached them of Hugh's disappearance. Even in these days of marvelous news carriage, very rarely any account of an incident is absolutely true in detail. Certainly it was not surprising if, at such a time, an irresponsible person had sent such intelligence, nor that, in the confusion of weightier matters, their reports from governor and burgesses did not mention the romance of young Chisholm.

Thus Jack and Master Robinson were sadly persuaded of Hugh's death. They indulged in many youthful reminiscences, over which

they mingled their laments, before they fell to discussing what should be done with Stephen and with the little estate of the planter.

"When Virginia is settled down again after this event," counseled the minister, "you should visit it, John, to look after the poor lad's affairs. At present I do not see that they call for you, and Stephen may be left to himself for a time. But I wish you were at the Plymouth Plantation."

Jack sighed inaudibly. Was there always to come some other call, when his heart was set towards Fort Manhattan?

"Why there?" he inquired.

"You see what William Bradford writes. The savages are threatening. There is constant illness and want to keep down Standish's forces. Yet their very lives depend upon reliable soldiers. The new settlement near them, at Wessagusset, promised well, but Weston's men appear to have done far more harm than good. They abuse and exasperate the people, and prey upon Plymouth. I wish its captain had a strong, young arm, like yours, to lean upon."

He read John's thoughts. "Why could you not as well spend this time of waiting there as here? You could go from Plymouth

to New Netherland. And you could communicate with Stephen more readily than from Holland."

John rose slowly, evidently deep in consideration. His gaze was bent upon the floor. His face was serious.

"If you think I should" —

"I certainly do think you should. And, after all, is n't it for the best? You cannot settle to work here."

John felt this was true, and also how much happier he would be in action. To be sure it meant leaving Elsje, to whom he carried the scheme. She proved quite of the clergyman's opinion in regard to the claim upon her lover. He therefore bestirred himself, and found the captain of the Mayflower, Master Jones, was about to sail again for New England.

Jack completed his hasty preparations, bade his friends good-by, and proceeded to join the ship, which carried stores to the needy settlers. As may be imagined the newcomer received a warm welcome at Plymouth. He found it laid out somewhat after this fashion: —

Within the palisade was a street leading to the water from the hilltop. It was crossed

by one going north along the slope and south to the brook, where it ended in a gate. At the intersection was a square surrounded by another palisade with four small guns. Governor Bradford's house stood at one corner of this square. Not far down Leyden Street was the blockhouse, on whose roof six cannon had been stationed. The lower floor was used for a church. Their coming was so timed that one of the first acts of John's life at the plantation was attendance upon the Sunday service.

The drum beat a signal from the street, in response to which every family issued from its house, the men with guns over their shoulders. They fell into step, side by side, in threes, forming in front of the captain's home. Behind them marched Governor Bradford, between the Elder and Standish. The women and children followed and, after them, the servants. Standish gave the signal, and they all marched up the hill to the church, where every man set down his gun so that he could seize it in a moment if it were needed.

The service opened with prayer by the Elder; then a psalm, given out line by line, was sung. William Brewster expounded the

Bible, some one of the men made an address, a collection was taken up, another psalm followed, and then a prayer.

Frank Billington was overjoyed at meeting his old comrade. As they quitted the church, he caught hold of the new arrival and, after his familiar fashion, began retailing the news of the colony. His brother's disappearance and probable death in Virginia was a matter in which Jack was disposed to fully sympathize. But he felt nothing except contempt for the tales Frank related of his adventures with Weston's men, among whom he had found boon companions.

"They are not under such iron rule as we suffer here," he said. "There is no having the constable look one up, of a Sabbath morning, if you have chosen not to go to meeting."

"I have already learned of the Wessagusset folk," observed impetuous Jack. "They will come to certain ill. I advise you, Frank, to keep out of their affairs."

"You give counsel as freely as ever, I see. The truth is we shall dwell happier here when we are more like Weston's men."

Frank's vanity always impelled him to hint at superior information. Fortunately for

him, at this juncture, his father noticed the conference and called him away. However, Jack was left with sufficient food for thought. Had the young fellow meant to hint that there was a conspiracy on foot against the government of the plantation?

With the approach of cold weather short commons became more apparent in the colony. They were reduced to a diet of nuts, or clams, or a handful of parched acorns, while those at Wessagusset had made no provision for a time of scarcity and were in still more piteous straits. Some sold their clothes to the Indians, and carried wood and water for them. Others took to the forest, where their marauding parties were a constant menace to the natives. Badly as they behaved, it was no wonder that resentment showed itself against all the whites. The sachem Aberdecest went to John Sanders, a leader among the offenders, and insisted upon reparation for a thief's increasing robberies. Sanders dared not refuse, but condemned the fellow to be hung. The satire "Hudibras" declared that an old, bedridden cripple, of no use to the colony, was executed instead of the young man who was the robber. However, this was mere and malicious poet's fancy.

In their need, Sanders proposed to Governor Bradford that they make an expedition along the coast, in search of supplies, John being one of the party. Frank Billington was surprised, a few days later, to meet him in the street.

"Squanto proved a poor guide," John explained. "Besides which we ran aground in the shoals, and were put back by untoward winds. Then Master Standish was seized with fever, and we must persuade him to return. Yet he would fain go on, ill though he was. What a spirit the man hath!"

"And is there to be no journey?"

"The governor saith he will make further trial, but I shall not be with him. 'T is John Howland's turn now. He would go."

Frank regarded his companion curiously. "What a fellow you are for your duty, John!"

"It must be the first thought of all, in this world, — is it not so? — or how would the world be managed?"

"Not every one is like you." A flush crept to Frank's cheek. "Stephen was: he always thought on right and wrong."

"Say you so? I am right glad to hear it, although my father's sons should, every one,

have fixed rules to guide them. Dear Steenie! It is a joy to know him a good little lad."

"I marvel you are not with him," pursued the inquisitive Frank. "You two must crave sight of each other."

"There was something to call me hither," said John simply.

Again his companion stared at him, nor did the speaker guess that his off-hand answer was to bear fruit in time to come. At present he was absorbed in more immediate affairs. William Bradford set out again upon the quest for provision, bringing back several hogsheads of corn and beans which he had purchased from the Indians. But at the first glimpse of the returning company, it was seen that Squanto was not among them. Their interpreter was taken ill with the prevailing fever, while they encamped at the harbor of what is now Chatham. Here he died, praying to the Lord of Whom he had first been told at Plymouth and, in his last moments, beseeching Bradford to ask "the Englishman's God" to receive him into His heaven.

The poor fellow had given no little trouble by his double dealing, and yet they were attached to him, so that many tears were shed

when his scanty possessions were divided among them, according to his directions. The bow and quiver which fell to Frank Billington roused a shamed remembrance of his part in the tale Squanto told concerning the barrels of plague.

"It is a rare gift," observed his father; "and may stand thee in good stead, should we wish to — to — thou knowest what I mean!"

"I am come to think 't were best," said Frank, "did we not meddle in that affair. What is it, after all, to us?"

John Billington dealt him a blow which nearly felled the youth.

"Thou art not called upon to think; that is my own part. I shall but bid thee act, and see that thou dost not fail me! What new folly hath possessed thee, pray?"

But Frank was sulky, and refused to answer.

During his voyage William Bradford found the natives suffering from a raging pestilence. He told Captain Standish privately he thought this fact alone prevented an onslaught of the savages upon Plymouth, no less than Wessagusset, so exasperated were they by the conduct of Weston's men.

"I must look to that," quoth the valiant little soldier.

Upon his recovery he set out to bring the corn which had been stored at Nauset. In their dull, hard life every one was anxious for the change such an excursion afforded. As Jack said, he had enjoyed his turn, and it did not come around again in the two trips of Governor Bradford, followed by another by Standish, all having the obvious purpose of securing food, with an underlying scheme for watching the condition of the country. At length, while the captain was absent on this last journey, important intelligence was brought to Plymouth.

Massasoit, their most influential friend, lay at the point of death. This was sorrowful news at such a crisis, when it would be dangerous to visit him, yet Indian etiquette was imperative upon that point; a dying man's acquaintance could render him no coarser insult than by neglect to be with him at his last hour. The governor called for volunteers in this delicate undertaking.

Edward Winslow offered himself, with Master Hampden and John Chisholm. They were all accepted, and Hobbomak was given to them for a guide.

Jack's chance had fallen to him again.

CHAPTER XXVII

"CAPTAIN SHRIMP"

"Do you understand," said the governor, "that none of you may return to us alive?"

The three looked at one another steadily. Master Winslow spoke for them.

"I think we understand."

"If Massasoit is dying, and our old enemy, Corbitant, come to power, it may well be that your sure destruction follow. I would not that you go in ignorance of it."

"We know," said Master Winslow again; and the gate closed on them.

They were following Hobbomak through the woods towards Paomet, when an Indian came suddenly out of the forest and accosted the interpreter.

"He saith Massasoit is gone!" exclaimed Master Hampden.

That signed their death warrant. They stood motionless for a moment. Then Edward Winslow approached Hobbomak: "Is Massasoit dead?"

"He is dead and buried."

Again they gazed from one to another.

"Shall we return?" asked John.

"We have our orders. Do as seemeth good to you. I shall go on to Paomet."

"Then I go with you," answered Hampden and young Chisholm, in one breath.

After this decision they proceeded unwaveringly upon their course, the next day reaching the home of Corbitant. They thought it wisest to feign perfect confidence, so that they entered the chieftain's hut, to find that he was absent. Winslow sent a native runner forward to Paomet to bring them the last intelligence in regard to the sachem. Meanwhile the white men, thus surrounded by treacherous foes, preserved an outward calm, being rewarded by word that Massasoit was still alive, although his last hour apparently drew near.

They pressed on, arriving at Paomet during the night, and guided to the royal lodge by the howls of the conjurers trying their charms upon the sick man. His visitors thrust themselves into the roughly boarded room where Massasoit lay. A feeble voice asked who they were.

"Winslow is here," was the answer.

"Let me speak with him," he murmured. Stretching out one thin hand to grasp the white man's: —

"Oh, my friend, I shall never see thee again."

His guest soothed him, and proceeded to administer medicines with wonderful effect. Massasoit by and by betrayed reviving strength, and demanded food — broth, he said, like that he had tasted at Plymouth. Master Winslow immediately dispatched two runners to the plantation for more of the tonic, and pigeons for the soup.

"I am somewhat put about," he observed aside to his companions. "The sick man is impatient and would eat the pottage straightway. Needs must I make him broth without meat, nor am I acquainted in such matters. Know you how 'tis done?"

Master Hampden confessed himself no cook.

"We must do something and quickly," said Jack. "Cause a woman to bruise corn. I have seen my mother brew porridge so. The broken kernels can be set over the fire in one of yonder pipkins to stew."

"What for savor?" suggested the others. They realized that this was no ordinary dish

"to set before a king." Their lives might depend upon its results.

"Can we not find herbs? The winter is so far gone that something may appear in the forest."

"I will search," said Winslow, and left them.

He presently returned bearing a handful of strawberry leaves and sassafras root. These he threw into the steaming pot, the amateur nurses testing the concoction with an improvised spoon.

"It hath a pleasant taste," said one after another.

It was then strained and a bowl set before Massasoit. He seemed extremely refreshed, and his gratitude was boundless.

"I see that you are my friends," said he. "I will show that I do not forget your kindness."

When they quitted the lodge Massasoit called Hobbomak aside. He told him the Massachusetts Indians were concocting a plan to destroy the Weymouth settlement and that of Plymouth. His counsel was that the whites strike the first and a decisive blow.

Many were the consultations on the way to the plantation. The uprising was close at

hand. It must be at once forestalled. Standish was directed to choose seven men, besides Hobbomak, with whom to proceed to Weymouth. John found himself repaid for his share in Massasoit's cure by a place in this enterprise.

"It is your just due," said Frank to him in hearty congratulation.

With a fair wind they sailed for Wessagusset, which place they found to be deserted. The inhabitants were abroad, searching for something to eat, but Standish brought them back by a gunshot signal. An Indian spy appeared with them, who returned to his people to say that "Captain Shrimp" — they had caught up the nickname from some of the colonists — was kind as usual, although his eyes betrayed his anger.

Pecksuot and Wituwamat, brother ringleaders, swaggered through the settlement to where Jack and John Howland stood before Standish's lodgings.

"Bring out this mighty soldier!" sneered Pecksuot, — "he who is sent to destroy us!"

"Master Standish!" Jack shouted. "This fellow seeketh you."

Their leader ran up to them. Pecksuot was tall and finely proportioned; the captain

was a head shorter, his slender figure like that of a boy.

"What do you wish with me?" he asked.

"Little man," said Pecksuot, "go work with the women. Don't think you can frighten us."

"Is that all you have to say?"

"No," cried Wituwamat, stepping forward. "You see this knife?" There was the face of a woman carved upon the hilt. "I have another," he went on, "with a man's face on it, that has slain both English and French. Some day the man and the woman shall marry."

"And now is that all?"

"No. We will go inside your new home. We may wish to take possession of it," — Pecksuot crossed the threshold while he spoke, — "and then we must drive your ruffians out."

Wituwamat followed him. Howland and Jack stepped aside, awaiting orders. Standish, too, entered the doorway. In passing he said quietly, —

"Call the others and come at once."

In a moment eight men crowded into the room.

"Shut the door. Fasten it."

Still the same low tone. Pecksuot drew his knife from its scabbard, testing the point, that was sharp as a needle. He grinned in enjoyment of the torture he supposed this delay inflicted.

"Now, Captain Shrimp," said he at length, "your hour has arrived. My knife shall drink the blood of your heart."

"And mine shall lay low the first," his brother continued, "who steps forth to aid his leader."

Captain Shrimp looked over his shoulder.

"At them, men," said he.

His voice was gentle. But every Englishman knew that either the savages or they were not to leave that house alive.

A flash of steel followed. Miles Standish flung his supple figure full against Pecksuot. He did not speak again, but he dealt blow upon blow, while the Indian's cruel knife struck at him more than once. At length a well-directed thrust was neither parried nor returned. There was the sound of a nerveless body crashing to the ground. Captain Shrimp had driven his blade into Pecksuot's heart.

Wituwamat, too, was fallen. Without a groan he died, pierced by many wounds.

"Open the door," said Standish.

Outside they found a crowd of settlers and natives. Among them was a third member of this factious family, a boy in his teens. He was uttering great threats and, at sight of his brothers' corpses, poured forth a torrent of abuse.

Standish's face did not change. Turning to Hobbomak and another faithful Indian, he said coolly, —

"Seize that lad. Hang him from the flagpole."

And he waited to see that it was done.

This ended the native plot. The little relief band marched in good order to Plymouth, taking with them the remnant of Weston's men.

"Standish hath saved all our lives," said John to Frank Billington. "And never heard I of such bravery."

"You have but seen that side of him," was the bitter response. "Wait until the hardness of his anger hath turned against you. Then you may understand why the man is hateful to me."

"Now, truly, I know not," was John's answer. "Yet, if you love or you hate, there is no one but must be true to his captain, and honor such valor as he hath shown."

Frank shuffled his feet uneasily.

"Your harping," he said, "on truth and on devotion to duty hath made you mad!"

"Nay, I were mad did I not see that truth and duty are what hold this life together. Two soldiers, like you and me, know rebellion to be the basest crime. If we had failed our poor Snow King, how should we loathe ourselves to think upon it now."

"You drive me to distraction!" burst out the other. "Jack — hearken — I have a secret!"

"I thought so. May I share it with you?"

"You must share it. You must aid me. What if I tell you that a plan is forming to drive captain and governor from the plantation, and to set up an easier rule?"

"'T were impossible!"

"It is but too possible. I need only tell you how and when it is to come to pass."

CHAPTER XXVIII

TWENTY TO ONE

THEREUPON Frank proceeded to unfold all details of the conspiracy. The Billingtons with several newcomers to Plymouth had agreed to meet at the block house, seize the arms stored there, and capture the plantation.

"What will they require?" asked John.

"Standish is to be set aside, and another governor appointed. You think the whole an odious scheme! But you are a stranger with us. You have no knowledge how my father hath been despitefully used, ere he planned vengeance."

"It is his plan?"

"For the most part. Judge him not in anger. Would you bear it tamely had you been sentenced, for speaking your mind, to have arms and feet tied for a half-day, and were pardoned only when you begged for mercy like a child? or had you been forced to run the gauntlet of the men in line, each smiting you with his musket?"

John wondered how even a severer penalty for insubordination was to be considered a wrong. Still, he could not blame the parent to the son further than was inevitable.

"First," said he, "we must think how this snare may be destroyed."

"It was why I have confided in you. Yet, Jack, I cannot cause my father more suffering!"

"Nay, that were barbarous, and there must be other devices. How were it if I came upon them, made fast the door, nor would free them until each had pledged himself to peace?"

One fine act does not make a hero. Frank was disgusted with the treachery which he strove to prevent; but he remained timorous and shifty.

"'T were surely discovered," he said, "and the plotters would suffer as mutineers."

Jack reflected for a little. "Hark you then! I will warn your father — and warn you — to leave the plantation, not to return till the discovery hath been made. You were to meet at evening?"

"At sunsetting."

"So take you to the wood! Look to yourself, and I will see that your father, too, is spared."

Jack tried to keep down all trace of his disdain for one who turned state's evidence by pleading for his own protection. Nevertheless Frank saw there was something wrong. He asked himself, eying his companion's face, what was wanting.

"I have done all that could be expected of me," he reflected uneasily.

By degrees, as he considered the matter, he guessed something of the truth. And he did not follow John's advice to depart. Throughout the day he kept close to his father, with whom he met young Chisholm in Leyden Street. Jack stopped to say: —

"If I were you, Master Billington, I would walk abroad this pleasant day; nor return till the evening was far spent."

So he passed on.

"What are these warnings?" Frank asked with a sidelong glance. "Think you he can foresee danger?"

"Not he. Newcomen hath instructed him to drop such hint to me, that I may be kept away from profit in the enterprise."

Alarmed by the situation, Frank endeavored to combat this conceit. Yet all he dared say was in vain. He at length gave up his protest, concluding to drift a little farther with

the current, and wait before he made confession, for the last moment of intervention.

The sun was sinking when father and son left their home. On the threshold they stumbled against a child, who clasped a paper in his fingers.

"'T is for you," he said, handing it to Billington.

The man read, Frank peering over his shoulder, —

"Do not go to the blockhouse."

With a glance at the youth, John Billington shrank back, threw wide the door and took refuge inside the building. To so arrant a coward the repeated menace was decisive. In some way, that action of self-seeking opened his son's eyes. It was abhorrent to think first of one's own skin. It would be impossible to John or Stephen.

He started on a run for the blockhouse.

The rest were assembled, handing about muskets and consulting when Frank entered the room. John Newcomen coveted the command the elder Billington exercised in their councils, nor was he sorry to see Frank was alone. Without waiting for the father, he began: —

"Make the door fast. We shall not tarry

Billington's pleasure. Hath every man his musket?"

Each one answered.

"Frank, get you to the roof and man the cannon. We are all armed. Now," as the lad started, "who preventeth that we hold the plantation?"

"I do."

The braggart turned. A gun crashed to the floor. Jack had let himself down from the roof. He stood against the wall, his musket cocked.

"The first to stir shall die at my hands," said he.

"What is all this?" blustered Newcomen.

"Only that your plan is known. Only that if you refuse to swear loyalty, to lay down arms, and leave this house, one by one, five moments apart, I will surrender you to Master Standish."

Newcomen grasped at a forlorn hope.

"Here is your friend Frank Billington. Would you give him up to be hung?"

The two looked at each other. Frank's cheeks grew white.

"He would give me up," said he. "And I deserve it."

Jack could not answer.

"Well-a-day," in a sullen growl, "the game is up. We must make what terms you choose."

"Raise your hand. Take the oath."

One by one, with moments of waiting between, Jack administered the vow to the twenty conspirators. There was a thrill in the voice that dictated to Frank, and an answering quiver as he repeated the promise. The boyish comrades knew the instant meant a revelation of life's lesson to him who echoed the words the other taught.

So Jack was left alone. When, gun on shoulder, he quitted the building, he was prepared for a shot from ambush, and he understood it to be fear of discovery which protected him from harm.

On the following day he was distressed to learn that three men were missing, — the Billingtons and Newcomen. Scarcely knowing what he dreaded, he hastened away by the path some one had seen them take. They were cutting flags. Led by the marks of their employment, he was lured far afield.

When on the borders of a swamp, he paused, hearing voices. The sound increased. Jack emerged from the thicket and saw before him Newcomen and the others in a violent

dispute. The former raised his sickle with words of which John caught enough to know that he upbraided Billington for his absence upon the previous night. Frank strove to pacify them. Jack started to his assistance, only to see the older man, goaded by the taunts, fall upon his enemy. He struck out savagely with his scythe.

A lifeless body toppled to the ground.

Father and son turned on the instant, and fled away. Before Jack could reach Newcomen they had disappeared.

He examined the corpse, saw that help was useless, and finally set out for Plymouth. Should he give the alarm or, for Frank's sake, allow the murderer opportunity to escape? There is no duty so hard as any involving distress to others instead of to one's self. Jack was thankful he was relieved of the responsibility. He lost his way and was so long arriving at the plantation that the first person he encountered, on entering the gate, was John Billington himself.

He was dripping with water, his teeth chattering, his face drawn with misery. Yet a Billington must always be a gossip, and there was a certain self-importance in the man's pitiable plight.

"Frank is drowned," he whimpered piteously. "One son slain by savages, and one son drowned! And I am without a child left to me!"

A crowd collected. He was full of his miserable news.

"We were crossing the pond you call Billington's Sea in a canoe we found upon the shore. It sprung aleak, and began to sink. I clung with both hands to Frank. He brought me near to land, near enough that I might save myself. Then — I think a cramp seized hold of him, for he went down, nor did he rise again."

Obviously he had no consciousness that Frank's life was given for his. Jack could but ask himself if the sacrifice were worth while, although, for his old companion, it had been the absolute right, and so it was well done. Still it only served to surrender the father to the hands of justice.

Without John's testimony it was easy to trace Newcomen's assailant. The first capital offense in Plymouth was punished, and John Billington was hung.

In an effort to save himself, he told of the plot, and what Newcomen had related of Jack's share in the matter. Thus the youth

was called before the council to repeat the tale of his adventure.

After their gratitude and congratulations William Brewster observed: —

"My own feeling is that this should be the time for John to journey to Fort Manhattan. Plymouth will offer an unhappy home to him."

"It is true," the governor reflected. "We owe him much. Yet the plotters will not forgive him, nor may he live with them in peace."

Captain Standish assented. "Is it churlish to send thee away, lad, for thy reward?"

"'T is the highest price you could pay," Jack interrupted, "had I done more than you think. I would not ask to leave you, albeit I long for Stephen."

"Then it is settled," said Governor Bradford. "The Dutch press towards the river to the south, with their trading sloops. Hobbomak shall lead you to them, and they will carry you to the fort."

The Indian was charmed with the errand, since their life in the forest, while they traveled southward, was a glimpse of nature such as he rarely enjoyed. Nevertheless Jack was interested to see that Hobbomak

felt no temptation to leave Plymouth. He was firmly attached to the Pilgrims, with whom he remained nearly twenty years after this, moving in Standish's household to Duxbury. It is supposed his grave was made on the southern slope of "Captain's Hill," near the rock known as "the Captain's Chair."

At the mouth of the Connecticut Jack fell in with traders, who received him as one of themselves. They gladly consented to carry the youth back to their headquarters with them.

"You are no Jankee Doodlen," said they, "but a true Hollander." He did not guess, when he heard the phrase, that "psalm-singing Johnny" was to prove a name for a race to come, and set the tune to which this nation would march some day, in "Yankee Doodle."

CHAPTER XXIX

THE CANOES MEET

JOHN was quitting New England at a time when it began to show, with every year, another and another isolated home or group of log houses. In 1626 Roger Conant laid the first hearthstone of Salem; in 1629 Charlestown was founded.

Now William Blackstone, a hermit who had made his home at Trimountain, invited the struggling Charlestown colony to improve its condition by emigration to his lands. The path made, in going back and forth between the hill nearest Charlestown and the cove and spring, laid the highway of what was, on September 17, 1630, formally named Boston. Blackstone was not satisfied, as time went on, with his new neighbors. He said he had left England to be free from an over-strict religious rule, and it had followed him with these Puritans. Rather than adopt their laws, he removed into Rhode Island. For thirty pounds he sold the town a tract of ground

for a general pasture and training-field. This was called the Common.

It was upon — how much! — future growth that John turned his back in departing for New Netherland, where, also, marvelous development was to take place. No one could foresee it on the day when the little trader sailed through what was already known as "Helle-gat," and neared the frowning stockade.

Naturally the youth's first inquiry concerned Elsje. A letter awaited him announcing that she and her friends were to attend one of the patroons. The New Netherland Company had offered as a prize to any of its members who should bring one hundred and fifty settlers to the region, land of sixteen miles frontage on the river and of indeterminate depth. Accordingly Killaen van Rensselaer, a jewel merchant of Amsterdam, negotiated with the Indians, through an agent, for a tract from Barren Island northward to Smack Island and stretching far into the interior. But all this was still in the future. John concluded that it was best to take passage on some sloop and follow Stephen to Norman's Kill. His brother's friend, Mynheer Kip, was ready to sail for the north,

and accepted the services of the young fellow, who bore a ready hand in the management of the little craft.

"It is a fine thing for a boy to travel," observed Kip. "It educates him. I never saw any one so ready as you at every sort of work, except one man who went up the North River with me on my last voyage. And he could cook as well as he could sail a boat."

"What do you call the North River?" demanded Jack, more interested in the phrase than in the description of the gifted stranger.

"This — the Mauritius. That is to distinguish it from one" (now known as the Delaware) "that is named the South River. We go out to both from Manhattan, trading for furs. But this young man I was telling you about — you will see him at the Kill. He struck up a friendship at sight with that little brother of yours."

Jack's attention was at once arrested. "Did he indeed? Well, whoever is kind to Stephen commends himself to me. What is the stranger's name?"

The Hollander shrugged his shoulders.

"I could n't tell you! It was something

outlandish — not good, plain Jan, like yours. You see he spoke no Dutch, and I no English. So we had to get along by signs and the savage lingo we were both acquainted with. When he saw what work I made of his name, he told me I might call him Natauquaus, after a friend who once did him a good turn. I could manage that well enough."

Jack laughed. "Things have come to a pretty pass when Europeans have to use the language of savages to make themselves understood. He was an Englishman, then?"

"Yes, but a right good fellow. Everybody liked him."

"You should like all of us. We have fought side by side in the fatherland."

"Ah, yes," Kip replied shrewdly. "But here we are every man for himself. Dutch, French, and English, each wants to secure the bulk of the trade with the natives. Those French are putting forward claims to this very land because of their explorer, Champlain, who came down from the north the same year that our man, Hudson" —

"Our man," interrupted Jack slyly. "He was one of your hated Englishmen, remember!"

"He sailed for a Dutch company, under a Dutch flag. Well, he went up the river within two months of the time when Champlain was fighting the Indians hereabouts and thinking he had gained the land for France. One of these days we will show them to whom it does belong."

Jack asked himself if it did not belong to the Indians. However, he knew that no property was taken outright from the natives, but was always purchased, even if for what, in the light of present values, appears a ludicrously small amount.

He began to look feverishly for the earliest glimpse of Stephen's home long before the bark huts could be seen from the water. When, at length, the sloop anchored and boats put forth, Jack felt it to be a hardship that he must busy himself unloading blankets, duffel cloth, combs, leaden beads, and gunpowder. He would much rather have been in quest of the brother whom he had not met in eleven years.

By and by Kip ceased his own toil long enough to hail, in what he truly called a savage lingo, an approaching visitor.

"Hey, Natauquaus, where have you been all this time? I'm waiting for you. Here is a fellow countryman."

John glanced up from his armful of "truck." He saw a tall, well-made youth, with a bright, open countenance that, he could not tell why, made him suddenly think of his mother, of the days in Scrooby when he was the baby frightened by the constable's men. It made him think —

"But poor Hugh is dead," he said to himself.

The white man with the Indian name came forward. He took Jack's free hand in his.

"Well come," he cried heartily. "I have not said a word in my own tongue since I came to New Netherland."

"Not with Steenje, as Heer Kip calls him?"

"As all men call him; it is his name. Nay, he, too, speaketh Dutch and, moreover, he hath removed to Fort Orange. His father and mother are there, if I heard right. I was abroad, trapping, at the time, nor can I make out much that these Dutchmen say. But I loved the lad — he is a good lad — if I could not understand his speech. I was grieved to lose him thus almost so soon as we had met together."

"His father and mother?" thought John. "Who may they be? Perhaps Elder Brews-

ter and his wife have arrived ; and yet why — But I shall soon learn all that!" To Kip he added: "Can I get a boat? Stephen has followed some friends to Fort Orange, and I must go in search of him."

The skipper looked wise. "So he had acquaintance among the new immigrants? Eighteen families went up the river, not long ago, Walloons and Huguenots, sent out by the company. Ask Natauquaus — No, I'll ask him myself — if he found the girl."

"What girl?"

"Did n't I tell you he was looking for a girl? That's why he is in this part of the world at all. But knowing no Dutch and meeting no English, he has had hard work of it."

He accordingly questioned the young man. Jack, listening to the jargon, could detect, from Natauquaus' face and gestures, that he had been disappointed.

"He thinks," Kip explained, "that she has been sent out to the Connecticut; he learned of a young woman among the settlers there who answers her description. He is going eastward in a day or two to see."

Jack was about to put some further inquiries when Kip proceeded to say: —

"There's a savage here with a canoe, if you want to cross to Fort Orange to-day. Do you?"

"Indeed, yes. You won't accompany me?"

"That would be impossible. I have all I can attend to. But," he noticed Jack's hesitation, "don't think you need wait for any aid you could be to me. I shall find helpers here. Natauquaus says he will look after you."

"I understood you to say it was a savage's canoe."

John knew nothing of the frail craft. He was not disposed to trust himself aboard one with a pilot equally ignorant.

"I said a savage would hire it to you. Natauquaus can manage it. He paddles as scientifically as any Indian I ever saw."

Despite this assurance the passenger did not feel altogether at ease as he timorously seated himself in the tottlish bark — literally bark — and watched his fellow countryman pick up the paddle, while Kip cast them off from the sloop.

"Indeed, you are a shipman," he was presently forced to cry, "and you understand this heathenish boat right well! I never saw

their like before I came hither a twelvemonth ago."

"And have you not learned to use them?"

"We had none in New England — I mean, none of our own. Whenever we encountered the savages — well, they had something else in their hands than an oar!"

"How was that? Fought you with them?"

Nothing loath, John plunged into a graphic account of the insurrection quelled by Captain Standish. As his story progressed, he was astonished that the death of Pecksuot was listened to in so cold a silence. He glanced over his shoulder to see if Natauquaus were attentive.

No, he was not. They were approaching the huts, the log stockade of the fort, where another canoe floated upon the surface of the stream. A boy was the oarsman, and two women sat at either end of the boat. It was towards the younger of these, a sweet-faced girl, in white cap and dark stuff gown, that Natauquaus was gazing. They drew nearer to the others. The Englishman propelled his craft close — close, before he drew his paddle from the water. The boy looked up, spied them, and smiled.

"Oh, I am glad to see you again," he cried in the native parlance.

Natauquaus paid no heed. He reached out and caught the young woman's hand.

"And are you glad, Mary?" he asked.

CHAPTER XXX

"WHO ART THOU?"

For a moment the general attention was absorbed in righting the canoes, after the girl's start had set them quivering. Meanwhile Mary Taylor and Natauquaus began a cross-examination of each other, called from boat to boat, during which the rest looked on smilingly, although only John could understand what was said. Stephen's English was becoming a lost art in these months of recurrence to the more familiar Dutch. The other woman did not comprehend a word. Yet every one beamed a blessing upon Mary's narration of her wanderings in the household of the ship's captain, with the rapidly changing plans of that period.

Jack had learned that this was the object of Natauquaus's search. He supposed the other occupants of the canoe were members of her family. As they approached the shore the older woman eyed Mary's friend, while he, in his turn, regarded her with a bewildered

expression of remembrance. He drew his craft up on the beach, and assisted John rather unceremoniously to alight.

"You speak French?" he asked.

"I do. I learned that at court."

"Ha! You are a courtier then? Interpret for me — if you will be so good — while I question yonder mistress."

John assented. The boy was busy with his boat; the young men helped the two women to land.

"Ask her," said Natauquaus, "if she is Madame Benoît."

John did put the query, but it was for himself. He darted towards the Frenchwoman, seizing her by both hands.

"Is this truly," he asked, "the foster-mother of Stephen Chisholm?"

"Why, yes," she stammered. "But I don't know you! The other man — his face is familiar; yours I have never seen."

"Once," John corrected her, — "eleven years ago. One changes in eleven years!"

Madame paid scant attention to this speech, for she was still gazing towards the older youth. "I am sure," she mused, "he is the one who visited us in France, looking for his brother."

"Who visited you?"

"He. Your friend." She inclined her head in the direction of Natauquaus, who stood near, and took advantage of the first pause to repeat: —

"Is it Madame Benoît?"

"Who art thou?"

John was studying the tall, sturdy figure. His lips trembled with earnestness. Natauquaus drew himself up haughtily.

"I know not wherefore you speak thus. I have good reason when I ask if the gentlewoman is one who hath served me and mine. You need not fear my questions. They concern a dear brother who is dead."

"I do not fear thy questions," John replied. "But — I thought of my own brother, and he, too, is dead. Who art thou?"

"I am Hugh Chisholm."

Madame Benoît was waiting for the name. She raised her voice, accosting the boy ascending the path from the river.

"Stephen!" she cried. "It is he — he whom you thought lost! Here is your brother!"

He hastened towards them.

"Is it Jack?" he said. "Jack, have you come?"

He stared in confusion from one to the other. He did not know which of these strangers, equally strange to him, had proved to be his kin. John flew to meet him, his face radiant.

"Thou art Stephen? Oh, dear lad, this is our Hugh!"

"Hugh? It cannot be. He is dead!"

"Stephen? It cannot be. He is dead!"

Mary Taylor laughed and cried together as the three brothers kissed and embraced one another.

"Yet I cannot understand," persisted Hugh. "I buried little Stephen's corpse, with my own hands, that March day in Virginia."

"I was never in South Virginia," urged the boy.

"And you," Jack continued,—"Hugh was slain in the massacre!"

"That he was," Stephen added. "I have mourned him these eighteen months."

"And still I am alive! Ah, this shall serve for many a tale in the winter nights to come! Hast thou heard, Mary? I have found not only thee, but my brothers, he whom I thought in the old world, and he whom I thought in Heaven."

Nor could Stephen neglect Madame Benoît for long. He ran to her side, and began chattering in French the marvelous tale of their recognition; so in a clamorous, happy group, they went up to the fort together.

After that first day, almost too agitated for perfect enjoyment, they grew to contemplate the novel relationships in connection with the future. "I would that you all go back to the South with us," suggested the young planter. "Virginia is the settlement of most abundant promise, and I have a home to offer you. Then, surely, I am the head of the family. I should have my kindred about me."

"Thou wilt be a patriarch, in truth, when thou art a married man," John observed. "Nay, old fellow, it would be good to share thy life, and yet my home is here. I have a Mary, too, in Elsje, who should dwell among her acquaintance in New Netherland. Then, Hugh, the religion of a colony makes great difference to its people. I shall be at home with the Genevans whom I find here. I was bred in their belief in the castle of Heidelberg. I cannot leave it now."

"There is weight in thine argument," Hugh agreed. "I went to Jamestown, my

face set against the Established Church, but I grew to manhood in its ways. The ceremonies appeal to me, while the simple type we knew in boyhood is sweet to thee. And I fear Stephen cares first and most for Plymouth?"

"As I do," replied the boy. "I am happy at Norman's Kill, yet my home is among the people of my father's house. I am no Churchman, like Hugh, nor of the Reformed faith, like Jack. I am an Independent, as all the Pilgrims are. My place must be with them."

"It is hard to separate one from another again," sighed Hugh. "Yet we must not find New England and New Netherland and Virginia too far to keep us from seeing our brothers and their homes."

"What say you?" suggested Jack. "May we not meet, God willing, every other year, first with Hugh, afterwards with me, and then with Stephen? Thus we shall know what happens, nor ever be parted as we have been."

"Agreed," said Hugh. "And let the time of our reunion — the tenth day of August — serve as the appointed season. What sayst thou, my boy?"

These brothers could not so cheerfully consent to what was a disappointment to each one, if the past of all three had not prepared them for any sacrifice. Stephen smiled up brightly into his elders' face.

"I am willing," he said. "Now that the common property is done away at the Plantation, I shall toil for a house and a piece of land. It may be, in good time, you two will find a yeoman in Plymouth, while Jack trades in pelts, and Hugh grows rich with his tobacco harvesting."

So these young pioneers had their work laid out before them. Stephen returned to New England on a trading vessel bound for the Connecticut. Master and Mistress Hugh Chisholm sailed to the home that awaited them at Henricus, and for Jack remained the hardest lot, — that of staying behind to watch his friends depart. Still he was not left disconsolate. There was the arrival, not long afterwards, of his old friend Master Whitecombe, among a party of immigrants; there was the hope of seeing his brothers soon again; there was the prospect of meeting Elsje.

He took up his abode at Fort Orange, and enjoyed the adventurous existence of a trader

who fitted out canoes, and, equipped for barter, paddled up the river into the wilderness, there to encounter wild beasts and men as wild. Thus he learned the ways of the woods, learning, too, to love the out of door, free, healthful life. He clung to the Benoît family, with whom he made a home wherein Madame and John built many an air castle which they and Elsje were to inhabit.

At length came the day when the Amsterdam colony arrived. It had proved a long delay, a severe test of faith and affection. Jack, attended by the Frenchwoman, went down to Barren Island to meet the laden sloops.

He steered his canoe towards the little fleet. He looked along the decks, crowded with human beings, cattle, and farm implements. A quaint head-dress, underneath which shone a smiling face, was leaning over the side. A kerchief fluttered towards him.

"At last, John," murmured Elsje's voice.

Madame Benoît and the Dutch girl loved each other at first sight. If Elsje would but love as well the home at the fort! Fortunately, her uncle was situated not far away in the northern part of the district, and fortunately, too, she saw the tiny village

under its most charming aspect, at the close of a summer day. Blue river and blue hills were bathed in sunlight, while a cloudless sky bent over them. She was in ecstasies, crying out with pleasure.

"Why, John," she said, clasping her hands together, "this is the spot my heart would choose out of all the world, believe me!"

With so happy an augury their lives were joined.

Thus Hugh on his plantation, Stephen on his New England farm, John at the trading fort, prospered in their undertakings. English by birth, Dutch and English and French by training, Churchman, Reformed, and Independent, these three were to show in their daily walk and conversation the influence of dead and gone ancestry. Of stock like theirs was to come the new race who made the America of to-day.

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